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# ITALIAN MEDALS







# ITALIAN MEDALS

BY  
CORNELIUS VON FABRICZY

13690

TRANSLATED BY  
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## PREFACE

**S**INCE the appearance, between 1881 and 1887, of the great works of Friedländer, Heiss, and Armand, publications on the subject of Italian medals have been confined to special articles in periodicals and a few catalogues of public or private collections. The *Medaillen der italienischen Renaissance* of Cornelius von Fabriczy (Leipzig, 1903) marks a fresh stage in the progress of the study. Its value as a summary of recent research, and as an independent contribution to the subject, has been generally recognised. It is also of interest as showing how the barrier between the study of medals, regarded from the old-fashioned strictly numismatic view, and the wider study of Italian art is gradually disappearing, to the advantage of both sides. The translation of such a book into the English language suggested itself as obviously desirable. It was at first hoped that the author would be able to revise the text, so that the

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## Preface

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English translation would be practically a second edition of his work. As, however, the proposed arrangement broke down, Mrs. Hamilton has simply translated the book as it stands. A few insignificant additions have been made in the footnotes, and distinguished by the use of square brackets. It need hardly be said that the author is in no way responsible for the work in its English form, except in so far as it faithfully renders the German text. I have had the opportunity of revising the translation both in manuscript and in type. The majority of the illustrations are from the same blocks as were used for the original work; but in the case of the medals by Vittore Pisano and Pasti, and that of Tomaso Rangone, new blocks have been made, in all cases without reduction.

G. F. HILL

BRITISH MUSEUM

*August, 1904*

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THE MEDALS OF THE QUATTROCENTO

I

INTRODUCTION





# THE MEDALS OF THE QUATTROCENTO

## I

### INTRODUCTION



EDALS are discs of metal resembling coins, which are not, however, meant to pass current as money in commerce, but are exclusively intended as memorials of persons or events. They are distinguished as such by the reliefs on each side, usually a portrait-head on the upper side (the obverse), an allegorical or symbolical, or more rarely an historic, scene on the back (the reverse). In both reliefs the artist should express his own artistic character; he should inspire the portrait with intellect and soul, infuse into the allegory individuality and life, the embodiment of his own ideas and talents, so that his work, limited though its sphere may be, may appeal to the beholder as a genuine work



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of art, revealing to him a glimpse into the mind of its creator.

According to this definition, the medal was, save in a limited sense, unknown to ancient art. For certain isolated Greek and Roman works of this nature, struck in commemoration of historic personages and events, and also the imperial medallions, which begin with a gold piece of Augustus and end with the magnificent medallion of King Theodoric recently discovered at Sinigaglia, were entirely official, legally current pieces, struck in strict accordance with the prevailing standard of coinage, although they may also have been distributed by sovereigns as mere marks of honour. On the other hand, the nearest parallel to the modern commemorative medals are the so-called *contorniates*, which first appeared about the middle of the fifth century, in later imperial times. These are the large copper pieces resembling coins, struck on the occasion of the public games and exhibitions, and presented or sold to the spectators, with representations of victorious athletes or charioteers, of bygone emperors who had rendered special services in the institution of the festivals; they also, however, frequently depicted mythological subjects, as well as scenes

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taken from the epics of Homer; finally, they were sometimes adorned with portraits of celebrated poets and philosophers. Since to all appearance they were of private origin and had no connection with the currency, we are justified in regarding them as incidental predecessors of the modern medal.<sup>1</sup>

The Middle Ages were more familiar with the idea of the commemorative coin, with the use of the type to depict persons and events of historic note. The pieces which belong to this category are a bracteate of Bernard of Saxony, celebrating his elevation to the dukedom; another of Boleslav of Poland, struck on the occasion of his penitential pilgrimage to Gnesen; denarii of the Dukes of Bohemia, with graceful representations of secular and sacred events, or even the head of the Arch Enemy; a series of denarii of the Bishops of Liège in the twelfth century, engraved some with secular, some with sacred designs. These, however, were still current coin, and do not therefore

<sup>1</sup> Compare on this point A. von Sallet, *Münzen und Medaillen*, Berlin, 1898, pp. 72, 100, 106, and 193. [More recent is the article by B. Pick, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencyclopädie*, iv, 1153 ff., according to which the contorniates began in the fourth century. They were probably intended for use in some kind of board-game.—G. F. H.]



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coincide with what we understand as medals. In this stricter sense we are only acquainted with a few exclusively decorative pieces or badges of honour of the Middle Ages. Such is the large gold piece, surrounded with several rows of pearls, of the great Merovingian King Dagobert I. (622-638); such also a similar piece of Louis the Pious (814-840), which by its unusual thickness is proved to be not a coin, but an official badge of honour: finally the bracteate-like decorative medalion of Henry I. (916-936), with its broad filigree frame, bestowed perhaps, like our own orders, as a mark of honour on a noble of the imperial Court.<sup>1</sup>

The true character of commemorative medals is first found in two pieces which correspond in style, form, execution, and subject, but which are separated from the last of the above-named medals by an interval of nearly five hundred years. These are the unusually large medals (9 or 9½ cm. in diameter), celebrated and much discussed in the learned world since the sixteenth century, which bear respectively the portraits of the Emperor Constantine on horseback and a bust of Heraclius

<sup>1</sup> Concerning commemorative coins in the Middle Ages, compare *Zeitschrift für Numismatik*, xiii, 322 ff., and A. von Sallet, *loc. cit.*, p. 174 ff.

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on their obverses, a representation of the Fountain of Life, and of the translation of the relic of the Holy Cross to Constantinople on their reverses.<sup>1</sup> From the inventory of the art collection of John of Berry (1340-1416), brother of Charles V. of France, it has lately been proved that both pieces were in the cabinet of the Duke, the greatest connoisseur and collector of the fourteenth century, among a number of gold medallions bearing the portraits of Roman Emperors, mediæval imitations of the antique, which were intended to present the semblance of antiquity. In this intention the artists who designed these two medals at latest in the last decade of the fourteenth century, and more probably somewhat earlier, were but partially successful. The conception of type and costume in both bears throughout the stamp of the Flemish-Burgundian art of the end of the Middle Ages, which dominated the creations of sculptors, goldsmiths, miniaturists, and tapestry-workers of the entire west of Europe. Their connection with the Court art of this period is, however, proved above all by the fact that, although apparently produced

<sup>1</sup> Illustrations of these two most remarkable pieces are to be found in the *Revue Numismatique*, 1890, Pl. IV.-VI., and in the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Oesterreichischen Kaiserhauses*, vol. xviii., Pl. XXII. and XXIII.



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with the intention of imitating the antique, the model of their arrangement is borrowed not from the antique, but from the ornamental heraldic style of the mediæval seals. From them are derived the size and shape, the elaborate circular legend, the representation of the Emperor on horseback. In one point, however, they deviate essentially from the seals, as also from all previous medals. They are not struck, as these invariably were, but cast and afterwards chased.

If, however, we search in the province of medallic art for the earliest evidence of a revival of the antique, undertaken with entire freedom and the most subtle understanding, we must cross the Alps to Padua. This city, owing to the traditions of its University and the living example of its highly honoured guest, Petrarch (who, among other things, had already collected Roman coins), was dedicated beyond all other places, throughout the Middle Ages and until the dawn of the Renaissance, to the cult of the antique. Here the tyrants of the city, Francesco Carrara, father and son—members of that princely family who first raised the banner of the antique in Italy, and first did homage to the ancient idea of Fame—on the occasion of the recovery of their lordship in 1390,

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caused two commemorative medals to be struck,<sup>1</sup> in which we recognise the ancestors of that widespread and brilliant posterity, which as "Medals of the Renaissance" arouse our admiration to so high a degree. Both pieces, examples of which have been preserved to our own days, are conceived entirely in the spirit of the antique, and are imitations of Roman imperial coins (Pl. VII., 2, 3).<sup>2</sup> In combination with a reverse taken almost without alteration from the mediæval coins of the Carrara family, with the representation of a car as the canting arms of the family, one of them displays on the obverse the likeness of Francesco II. Strikingly—even to the characteristic truncation of the neck—does it resemble the portrait of Vitellius on the sesterces of that Emperor, while the bust of the elder Carrara (Francesco I.), in the

<sup>1</sup> [The medals must have been issued by the younger Francesco, since his father was from 1388 until his death in 1393 the prisoner of Gian Galeazzo Visconti.—G. F. H.]

<sup>2</sup> The illustrations in our book are taken for the most part from the works of Heiss and Friedländer, from the *Jahrbuch* of the Royal Prussian Art Collections, that of the Imperial Austrian Museum, the Catalogues of the Cabinets of Florence and London, as also from numismatic periodicals. A smaller number are taken from casts, for which we have to thank the courtesy of keepers of the collection of coins in Berlin, Vienna, Milan, and Florence; also M. Prosper Valton, of Paris. To all these gentlemen we repeat our most grateful thanks for the friendly permission accorded us to reproduce their casts in the present work.



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peculiar representation of the shoulder and in the draping of the paludamentum, recalls but little more distantly the later medallions of Commodus and Septimius Severus. Nevertheless, both show throughout individuality of conception, and are for the date of their production masterpieces of art.<sup>1</sup> Of the same period we also possess three medal-like struck proofs, so-called "essais" or "testoni" of die-engravers, the work of a Venetian family of die-engravers, the Sesti, with their names and dates (1393 and 1417). The obverses are direct copies of the imperial coins of Galba and of a Greek coin (Alexander the Great or Antiochus of Syria); on the reverse are a standing figure (Venetia?) and a mythological scene (the Rape of Persephone or the Rescue of Andromeda). These are, to an even greater degree than the medals of the Carraras, direct and conscious imitations of Roman imperial medallions. Since they possess a general striking similarity

<sup>1</sup> The long-continued dispute as to whether these medals, as Julius Friedländer, the late Director of the Cabinet of Coins in Berlin, maintained as early as 1866, were original and contemporary striking, or merely restitutions—that is, pieces made at a later time but after the earlier style—has lately been finally decided in favour of the above-mentioned scholar. In one of the already-mentioned inventories of the Duke of Berry we find cited as early as 1401 a lead cast from one of the Carrara medals, which fixes its issue during the interval between 1390 and 1401.

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of style to the Carrara medallions, these latter medals have lately been pronounced to be probably works of the Sesto family, perhaps of that same Marco who in 1393 produced the proof bearing the bust of Galba.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Padua was the cradle of the modern commemorative medal. Its first creators, however, left no immediate successors, and half a century passed before Vittore Pisano, the gifted son of neighbouring Verona—probably knowing nothing whatever of his Paduan forerunners—created the Renaissance medal, which differed considerably from the earlier type, and in a series of splendid works brought it to that perfection, which after ages have rarely attained and never surpassed (see Chapter II.). For the rest these early works of the Paduan school, even though entirely corresponding to the idea of the modern medal, still differ essentially in one point from the products of the Quattrocento, in which this branch of art reached its zenith. The earlier medals were struck, while with but rare exceptions the latter were cast. A few words on the technique of the production

<sup>1</sup> All the questions arising here are treated with his accustomed thoroughness in an extremely suggestive essay by J. von Schlosser: *Die ältesten Medaillen und die Antike*, in vol. xviii. (1897) of the *Jahrbuch der Kunsthist. Samml. des allerk. Kaiserhauses*.



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of the medals of the fifteenth century must suffice at this point,

The imperfection of the art of striking, which was still in its infancy, caused the artists to prefer the process of casting, since casting imposed no limit either on the size of the medal or the height of the relief. In order to produce the models for casting, the artists—for the most part sculptors, but also, in isolated cases, painters and architects—modelled the portraits and the reverses in wax, a material which, thanks to its plasticity, gave the most favourable opportunity for the embodiment of the most essential aims and qualities. The but recently discovered model of one of the best known medals of the end of the fifteenth century, that of Filippo Strozzi, seems nevertheless to bear witness to a second method of production, which was perhaps employed merely in isolated instances, and in any case only at a later time; the model is cut out in high relief on a disc of iron.<sup>1</sup> From the

<sup>1</sup> Against this explanation of the origin and aim of the model in question, put forward by a professional numismatist (A. von Sallet), a no less competent authority has advanced what appears to us to be a well-founded objection. It is pointed out that the iron model "lacks numerous delicacies and especially attractive characteristic traits, by which the bronze medal—supposed to be cast from it—is in so high a degree distinguished, and which are not merely due to subsequent tooling. The iron is therefore probably, even if it is old, in any case only wrought after the medal" (J. Menadier).

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model produced in one or the other way a sunk mould was prepared in moulding sand, from which the medal was cast usually in bronze, more rarely in lead, gold, or silver. It was in most cases found necessary afterwards more or less to chase the medals thus produced, in order to remove any imperfection in the casting. The best masters, however, were able to make casts so perfectly clean that they reproduced the full beauty of the original model, impressed with the *cachet* of its creator's hand, so that no subsequent chasing was necessary. Such untouched specimens are naturally preferable to chased medals, since in the latter invariably the charm of the uninjured warm surface, and frequently also the refinement of the original expression and form, have been lost owing to too much, or too sharp, chasing. Inscriptions round the margin were usually added both to obverse and reverse, or occasionally also filled the entire field of the reverse. These had as a rule been already set in the wax model, and therefore came out in relief in the cast; but occasionally the artists incised them afterwards in the finished bronze cast. Only on a small number of the medals that have come down to us did the artists sign their names or their initials. In conclusion,



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the surface was given a fine, carefully produced patina of warm brown, frequently shading into green, or occasionally of a quite dark colour, and thereby acquired the charm of the reflected lights which alone brought out fully the subtle refinements of these masterpieces in miniature. The patina, it is true, is frequently too thick and black, and then proves as injurious to the effect as a surface laid bare by rubbing or cleaning.

With the adoption of the process of casting instead of striking medals was completed their entire emancipation from the Mint; they thereby acquired an independent standing. Henceforward it is no longer the handicraftsman who laboriously cuts the die with which they are to be struck; it is the artist, who, through a process which allows him unrestricted liberty in the use of the material, is enabled to inspire his work with the full spirit of his own individuality, and thereby to raise it into the region of high art.

As a rival to the cast medal, such as we have described, there appeared, not before the end of the fifteenth century, the struck medal. The perfection to which the machinery for striking coins had meanwhile been brought must have en-

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couraged men to employ it also for medals, all the more because, owing to the capacity for resistance of the die, it was possible to use the model with the greatest effect. It was, indeed, two celebrated masters of the Mint at that period, Francia and Gambello, who first introduced the striking of commemorative medals on a large scale. In the course of our inquiries we shall see how the new method found ever-increasing favour in the Cinquecento, so that about 1550 the cast medal had been almost entirely driven from the field—in no way to the advantage of the artistic quality of the productions of this branch of art, which sank lower and lower, until finally in the seventeenth century it shared in the general degradation of the arts.

What was the reason why, during the zenith of Italian life, Italian culture and art, the medal enjoyed that universal appreciation and popularity and reached that perfection to which the masterpieces of the art on the one hand, and on the other the great number of examples that have survived, bear witness?

In the change from existence as member of a class, characteristic of the Middle Ages, to the individual life of modern



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times, the man of the Renaissance became once more completely imbued with the ancient conception of personal fame. With all the impetuous spirit which filled every movement of this period, he longed for the glorification of his personality in literary or artistic monuments, in order that his memory might survive beyond the limits of his earthly existence. Among other means, the commemorative medal suggested itself as especially suitable and convenient for the purpose. Was it not also within the reach of the more modest wishes of those who were unable to satisfy their thirst for glory by the erection of statues and palaces, not to say the foundation of temples and towns? Nay, the medal—and precisely in virtue of its unassuming character—promised, and in more than one instance actually fulfilled, the assurance of greater durability than many a more ostentatious monument, which but too often was destined to fall a sacrifice to the rivalry of parties or the vicissitudes of taste. Every fairly memorable moment of a life might thus be immortalised in its fashion by a work perfect in its kind from an artist's hand, and this work, reproduced in many copies, could be presented to friends or relatives in a like position, bestowed as tokens of princely grace on favourites

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or trusted servants, sent to friendly Courts abroad, or buried under the foundations of newly erected monuments. As a portable monument, the medal thus accompanied all great events in the life of the individual and his family, and later also in that of the State. In this sense we may regard the medallic art as *par excellence* the art of the Renaissance. It was born with the Renaissance, and in the service of the aspirations of the Renaissance it developed to an undreamed-of degree of popularity and reached the utmost limit of perfection; with the exhaustion of the tendencies and ideals of the Renaissance, it sank not only from its perfection as a work of art, but also from its significance—we might say—as a symbol of culture. For centuries, then, it enjoyed an at once magnificent and pitiable existence exclusively in the service of the great ones of the earth, as memorials of the birth, the accession, or the marriages of princes and kings, until at length in our own days it has been summoned to arise to a new and auspicious life.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the peculiar qualities of the medal, on which we

<sup>1</sup> Compare on the above A. Lichtwark, *Die Wiederbelebung der Medaille*, Dresden, 1897; Roger Marx, *Les Médailles françaises depuis 1789*, Paris, 1897; and *Les Médailles contemporaines*, Paris, 1898; lastly A. R. v. Loehr, *Wiener Medailleure*, Vienna, 1899.



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have dwelt, it is not surprising that it immediately became a favourite object of the collector. The earliest patrons of this newly created branch of art were at the same time the first collectors of its products. In the Cabinet of Art and Curiosities of the Duke of Berry we have already seen the only specimens of medals existing in his time. The Este of Ferrara not only arranged for the production of a complete series of medals of their family, but provided also that other reigning houses should send them their medals, and caused their favourites and faithful servants to be immortalised on medals. Their example was followed by other princely families—the Gonzagas in little Mantua, which, thanks to the patronage of its rulers, produced comparatively the greatest number of medalists; the splendour-loving Sforzas of Milan, as also the lords of Rimini and Urbino; Alfonso of Naples, who not only preserved a valuable cabinet of medallions of celebrated Romans, and in surveying them felt spurred on to emulate their example, but was also one of the first to establish at his Court a home where the new art flourished extensively, and took pleasure in surrounding himself with its creations; finally, Pope Paul II., whose far-famed cabinet of gems and medals undoubtedly

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included the works of his own time as well as the marvels of ancient art. In witness of the fact we may see the medals of the Pope himself, which within our own days have been excavated from the foundations of the Palazzo di Venezia built by him. Nay, we have an interesting proof that the medallists themselves set a high value on the works of art which they had created, in the will drawn up in 1512 by Giancristoforo Romano (with whom we shall presently become acquainted). Among the artistic objects in his collection he cites thirty-four bronze and eighty-seven silver medals, the former of which at least were assuredly works of the Renaissance. The Medici of Florence outshone all the other amateurs of whom we have spoken; and the inventories of their treasures, in particular, give us a nearer glance into their property in medals. While the catalogue of the year 1456 enumerates, besides fifty-three gold and three hundred silver medals, which, to judge from the material, probably belonged exclusively to the antique, only thirty-seven bronze (consequently modern) pieces, the inventory of the collection made at the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492 mentions, in addition to the gold medal of Cosimo the Elder, no less than 1,844 bronze medals. To such propor-



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tions had the collection of modern commemorative medals possessed by the family risen in little more than a generation. The Grand-Dukes of the Medicean family subsequently made it their business to add to this collection, and Florence is consequently now fortunate in possessing in the Medagliere Mediceo, so admirably exhibited in the National Museum, what is probably the only collection of this kind, in great part reaching back to the pieces acquired in the Quattrocento and Cinquecento.<sup>1</sup>

In the following centuries the interest of the collectors, chiefly of princely rank, following the taste of the times, abandoned the severe austerity of the Renaissance medal; and where such medals remained from earlier collections, they were banished to hidden corners of their cabinets. Not until the beginning of the last century do we meet again with isolated connoisseurs of refined taste able to appreciate their value. Among the earliest of these was Goethe; the pieces which he collected, among them unique specimens of inestimable value—now accessible to the public in the Goethe

<sup>1</sup> [According to a writer in the *Athenaeum*, October 3rd, 1903, p. 458, a considerable number of forgeries have been substituted for originals among the earlier pieces in this collection.—G. F. H.]

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Museum at Weimar—prove the unerring accuracy of his artistic judgment. An essay from his pen (published in the *Jena Literaturzeitung* of 1810) testifies to the warm interest aroused in him by these insignificant-looking products of the artist's hand, long before objects of the kind found favour with wider circles. The taste for such works, however, has been steadily on the increase for somewhat more than a generation, so that now some of the most complete and excellent collections are in possession of private connoisseurs (G. Dreyfus and Prosper Valton in Paris, and F. W. Green at Winchester).<sup>1</sup> As regards public museums in Italy, the most valuable treasures of this kind are to be found in the museum in Florence, already mentioned, in those of Milan, Turin, Venice, Bologna, and Modena; while on this side of the Alps the numismatic cabinet in Berlin stands foremost, while the cabinets of Paris, Vienna, London, vie with it partly in the numbers, partly in the rarity of their pieces. Munich also owns a collection distinguished not so much for the number as for the excellent quality of its specimens.

<sup>1</sup> [In addition, the collections of Messrs. George Salting and Max Rosenheim in London should be mentioned.—G. F. H.]



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It is in keeping with the so recently awakened appreciation of the value of the medal as a work of art, that not until our own days has it become the subject of methodical scientific investigation. For the voluminous compilations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with almost the sole exception of the thorough Möhsen (1773), provide little else than an uncritical tissue of cursory statements, false assertions concerning numismatic, genealogical, biographical, and historical matters. The task of scientifically sifting the material for the history of the art met with absolutely insuperable hindrances, due in part to the comparative rarity of the works which should serve as its object, but still more owing to the scantiness of the information handed down concerning their origin and their creators—information which had to be sought for the most part in incidental statements and scattered notices from secondary sources. In this respect, next to Möhsen's book just mentioned, Ch. Lenormant's *Trésor de Numismatique* (1834), in spite of its defects and peculiarities, has more especially by its illustrations provided a valuable groundwork for deeper research, and Bolzenthals *Skizzen zur Geschichte der Medail-*

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*leurkunst* (1840) have given an adequate summary of the whole material. But for our own days was reserved the task of compiling, in three publications, each of which may be regarded as a model of its kind, the material which had hitherto been contained in literary sources and works of art bearing on the subject, and of giving a scientific account of the historic development of our branch of art, so far, that is, as the present state of our knowledge permits. A. Armand enumerated in a critical catalogue (2nd ed., 1883) 3,500 Italian medals up to the beginning of the seventeenth century known to himself. (Their number has since been increased by more than a hundred additional pieces.) In his "*Italienische Schaumünzen des 15. Jahrhunderts*" (*Jahrbuch der königlichen preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, vols. i.-iii.) J. Friedländer described all medals, up to the year 1530, hitherto made known. His discussion of the artists, persons depicted, designs on the reverses, explanations of their inscriptions, and appreciation of their art and style, reveal the efficiency bestowed by an inborn discrimination and a lifelong acquaintance with the subject. Finally, in the nine folio parts of his *Médailleurs de la Renaissance* (1881-1892) Alois Heiss published a number



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of monographs of individual masters and schools, which, more especially in the matter of illustration, filled the gaps left by his predecessor, since they depicted all the works of the artist treated of in each case. The death of the compiler unfortunately prevented the completion of the extensive *Corpus Numismatum* which he had planned, and which thus supplies no information on the artists and works of Verona, Mantua, Milan, Padua, Bologna, and Rome, to say nothing of anonymous artists.<sup>1</sup>

All further writings on the medals of the Italian Renaissance must be based on these three fundamental works ; and we also shall follow them in our survey of the subject in the following pages.

<sup>1</sup> The reader will find further information concerning the literature on this subject, more especially concerning the three last quoted works, in two articles by the author in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 1884, pp. 30 ff., and in the supplement to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 23rd, 1884.

II

VITTORE PISANO AND HIS SUCCESSORS  
IN NORTH ITALY












## II

### VITTORE PISANO AND HIS SUCCESSORS IN NORTH ITALY

HEN we remember how the idea of posthumous fame determined the revival of the medal, we shall not be surprised that, of the two places which gave birth to the Renaissance, it was not in republican Florence, but amid the Courts of the splendour-loving and ambitious princes so numerous in North Italy, that the commemorative medal first appeared as a fresh means for their glorification. To Verona, the art-loving city, which throughout the entire fourteenth century had possessed a school of painters vying in importance with the Florentine Giottesques, belongs the glory of having given birth to Vittore Pisano, surnamed Pisanello (*circa* 1380-1451), the creator of the Renaissance medal. We are not acquainted with the immediate circumstances of his life; we only know that, one of the earliest followers of the



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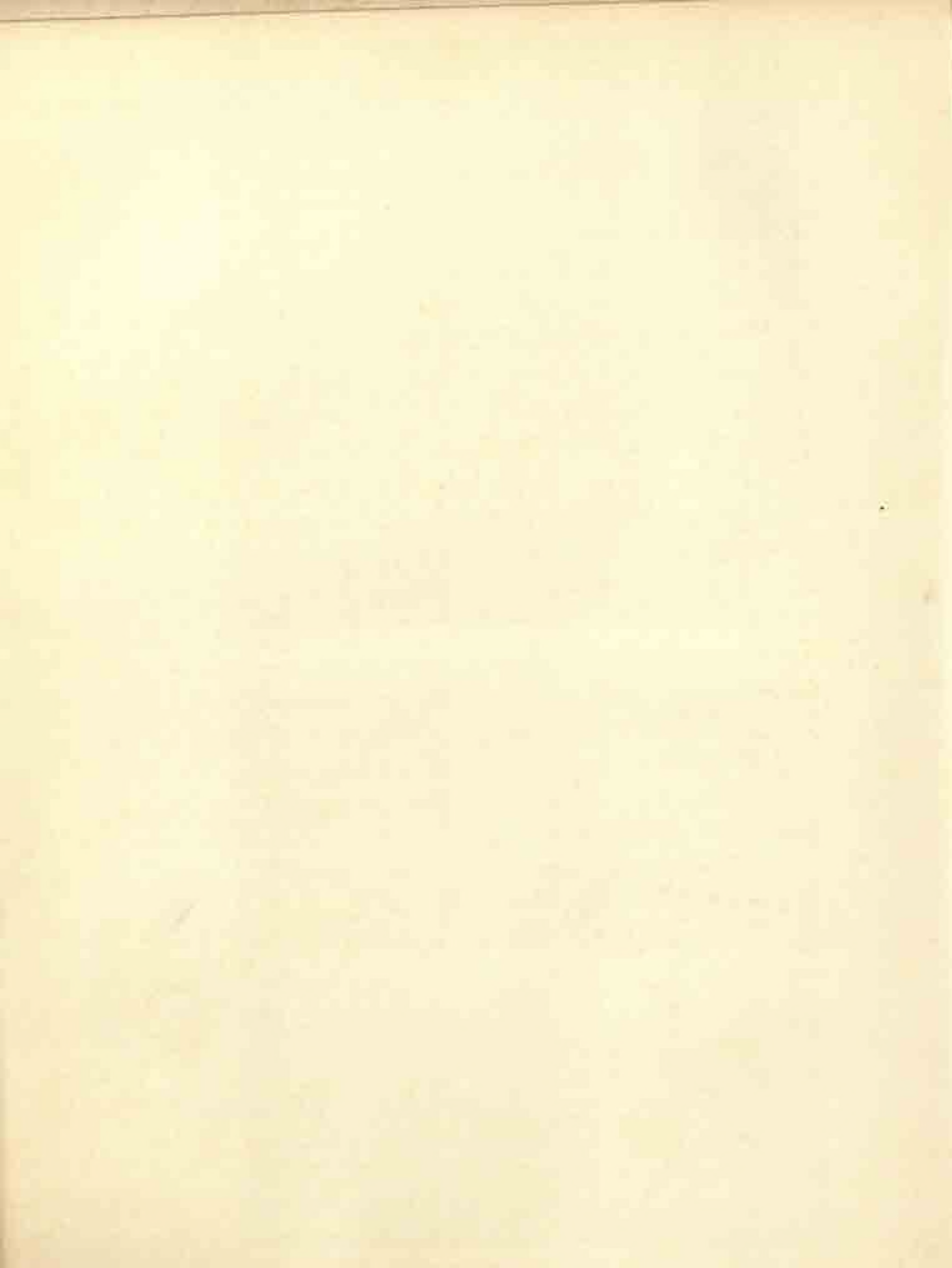
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modern realism, he was widely known as the creator of works of monumental painting and as the most renowned portrait painter of his time beyond the confines of his home as far as Pavia, Mantua, Venice, Ferrara, and Rome, before, within the last decade of his life, he was to add still further to his title to immortality by his new creation in plastic art.

The opinion, which has recently been expressed, that the master may have been inspired thereto by the Flemish-Burgundian imperial medallions already mentioned, is probably justified. In the precious volume of drawings, most of them due to Pisanello, preserved as the *Codex Vallardi* in the Louvre, are three sketches from his hand for the reverses of medals, which he afterwards adopted in somewhat altered form for one of his medallions of Alfonso of Naples. Here, in the representation of a triumphal car drawn by four horses, the artist has evidently allowed himself to be influenced by the reverse of the Heraclius medal. He doubtless fully believed that he had before him ancient works worthy of imitation, and, inspired by the newly awakened reverence for antiquity, was striving to revive an ancient custom in glorifying in like manner the rulers of his time. The earliest of his medals,







## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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moreover, presents the most remarkable similarities—naturally, apart from style—to the medal of Constantine in size, in method of casting, in the manner of depicting the horseman, in the careful representation of the horse itself, even down to its peculiar amble, and finally in the combination of Greek and Latin inscriptions. This is the medal of John VIII., the last emperor but one of the Palaeologus race, who came to Ferrara in 1438 to implore aid against the Turks from the Council assembled there for the settlement of the schism (Frontispiece).

With it we may class the imposing series of his works—twenty-four signed pieces with twelve others that may assuredly be ascribed to him. It is indeed a proud procession of crowned heads, celebrated princes and tyrants, dreaded condottieri, renowned statesmen and scholars, that the genius of the master places before our astonished and delighted gaze. In the ardent desire for posthumous fame all have sought to be immortalised by means of Pisano's spatula and crucible. We can understand the praise heaped upon these creations by his contemporaries in verse and prose. It was the sense of the truly significant, the sublime, consistently displayed in these



## Italian Medals

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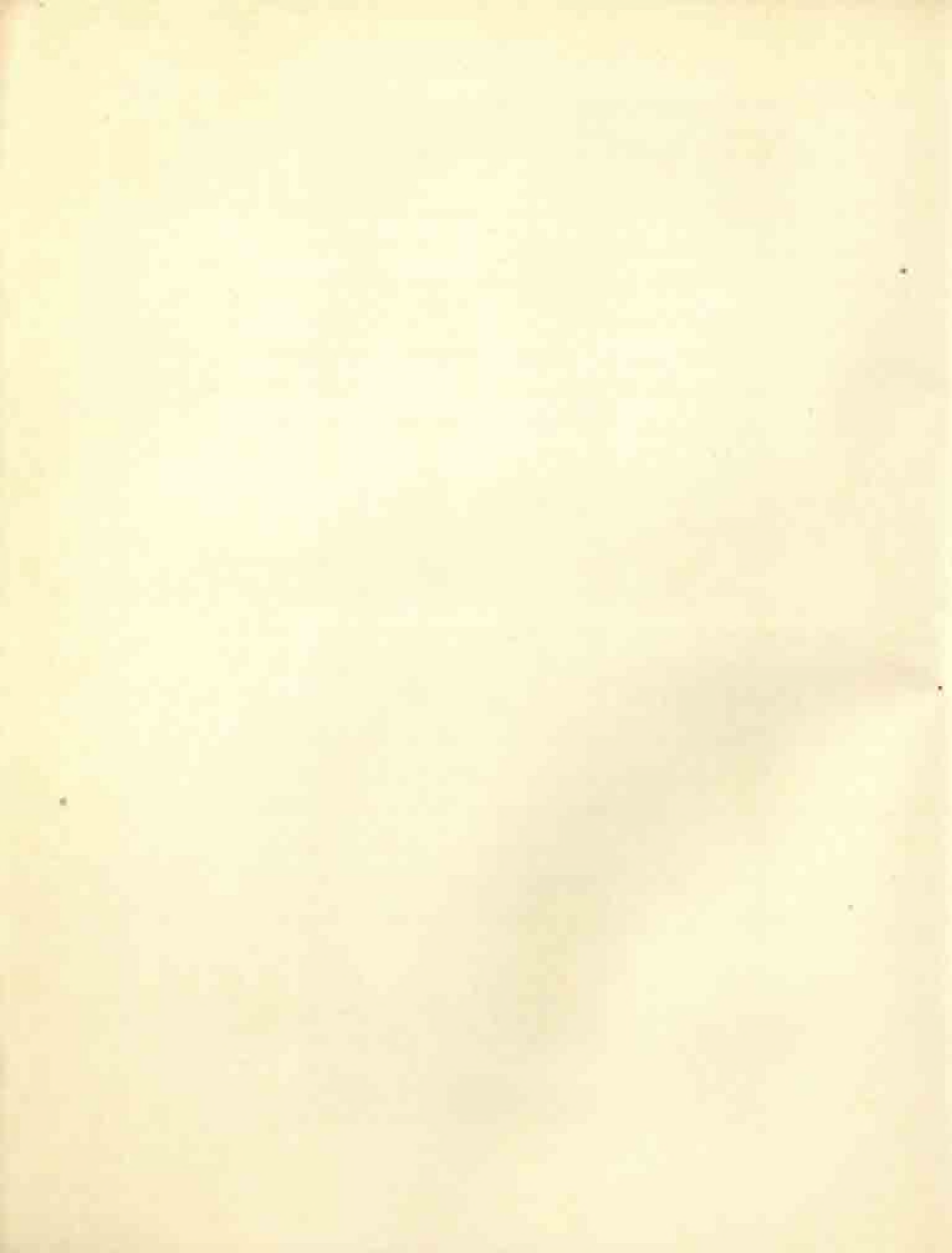
works, to the exclusion of all trivial ornament or refinement, that won them the approval of the best critics. The gifted artist never fails to seize the character of the individual with unerring directness—faithful and true to life, but ennobled by a stylistic treatment which accentuates only the essential. Masterly is the way in which he catches the bold poise of the head, reproduces the clear strong outline of the profile, gives concentrated expression to passionate ferocity and untamed energy, as well as to high intellectual endowment or profoundly contemplative character. Nay, in the single woman's portrait that we possess by his hand, that of the twenty-three-year-old Cecilia Gonzaga (1447), later renowned for her learning and piety, he fascinates us by the refined charm of expression, a refinement we had scarcely expected in the pitiless observer of the coarser realism of life (Pl. IV.). And all this breathing life is evoked by his genius with the most simple means. His conception of a subject combines the most austere severity with the most attractive freshness; his modelling, invariably simple, scorns all superfluous detail; his technique is based on the most intimate knowledge of the material, losing no advantage that it offers, without ever



MALATESTA NOVELLO BY PISANO

*Fine p. 30*





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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seeking to force from it anything unsuited to its nature. Only to speak of examples which we reproduce, how faithfully does the profile portrait (and Pisanello made without exception only profiles) of Palaeologus (1438) depict stiff self-satisfaction; that of Sigismondo Malatesta (1445) the cold haughtiness and savage determination of this prototype of the tyrant of Renaissance times (Pl. II.); how does that of his brother Novello, along with the unmistakable family likeness, reveal the gentler character with its susceptibility to noble influences (Pl. III.); that of Alfonso I. of Naples (1449) candid magnanimity (Pl. V.); that of Vittorino of Feltre, the much sought-after humanist teacher, the spiritual features of the scholar (Pl. VII., 1); finally that of Inigo Davalos (Pl. VI.) the self-contained character of the noble Grand Seneschal of King Alfonso.

Almost greater is Pisanello in the designs for his reverses. Without the inspiration of any previous model, his marvellous intuition at once hits on the most appropriate conceptions. What fresh, healthy life is he able to impart to his allegories, thanks not least to the magnificent animal figures, which he loved to employ, combining a monumental treatment with



## Italian Medals

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an intimate penetration of their nature! What mastery, what restraint he displays in composition and technique, while he avoids pictorial effect no less than the one-sided accentuation of the sculpturesque element and the exaggerated labouring of the relief! How frequently does he thrill the innermost feelings of the beholder by the intimacy of the expression, reaching by apparently the simplest means to undreamt-of depths of soul! Or can we conceive a more thoughtful symbolisation of the power of love than that on the medal struck in 1444 to celebrate the marriage of Lionello of Este with the daughter of King Alfonso of Naples, where Cupid, holding a sheet of music before the lion—a play upon the name of the giver of the commission—compels the mighty beast to song?<sup>1</sup> (Pl. I.). Is there any prouder illustration of the motto “*Liberalitas Augusta*” on Alfonso’s medal than the eagle in its eyrie, distributing its prey to the vultures that surround it? (The well-known device of Roman imperial coins, as well as the eagle, which

<sup>1</sup> The Berlin example, reproduced in our illustration, is a lead cast of great beauty, so finely and surely chased, that Friedländer holds it to be one of the pieces which, according to the account of a contemporary, Pisano himself chased in order to use it as a model for the bronze casting.



CÉCILIA GONZAGA. BY PISANO





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appears on the coins of Agrigentum, testifies to inspiration by ancient examples, examples which the artist no doubt found in the royal collection, and to which the sketches in the Vallardi Codex also point.) Is not the entire fascination of Romanticism forestalled in the charming girlish figure of the Gonzaga medal—the maiden who, entrusting her innocence to the protection of the unicorn, sits sunk in dreams in a moonlit, rocky waste? Finally, does it not border on the marvellous how the figure of Novello Malatesta, in spite of being clad from head to foot in armour, thrills with inward excitement, as with an expression of deepest emotion he kneels before the Saviour, who bends to him from the cross? Truly, in presence of such creations, it must strike us with surprise that Goethe (in the essay quoted above in the *Jena Litteraturzeitung*) can only, on the one hand, praise "his naïve simplicity and the sincere imitative industry," and on the other censure "his somewhat timid and stiff treatment"! In Pisanello, indeed, we seek in vain for the conventional flow of line and the academical smoothness of the Caracci and Domenichino, which so charmed Goethe in Italy.



## Italian Medals

Among the medals of Pisanello not attested by his signature, the three portraits of Leone Battista Alberti, "the universal genius of the Renaissance" *par excellence*, which A. Venturi has quite recently ascribed to our artist, claim our especial attention in virtue not only of the person depicted, but also on account of their value as works of art.<sup>1</sup> In our opinion only the single specimen in the Louvre (Pl. VII., 4) deserves to be considered, so far as the attribution in question is concerned; of the two others in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris and in the Dreyfus collection, we hold the first to be a contemporary imitation of the Louvre medal, the second a restoration of the sixteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Alberti dwelt at Ferrara during the time that Pisano was engaged on the medal of Lionello of Este, and, in fact, his portrait, both in style and arrangement, shows many points of similarity with the medal of Lionello. On the other hand, it deviates from all authentic medals of Pisanello in its

<sup>1</sup> Concerning Alberti, compare Jacob Burckhardt's *Kultur der Renaissance*, 3rd edition, Leipzig, 1877, vol. i. p. 168, and Anton Springer's *Bilder aus der neuern Kunstgeschichte*, 2nd edition, Bonn, 1886, vol. i. pp. 239 ff.

<sup>2</sup> In order to support this view we ought to reproduce the two other pieces. This, however, is not the right place for such a discussion, which we reserve for another occasion.







## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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elliptic form, its unusual dimensions ( $15\frac{1}{2}$  by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  cm.), and also in the absence of a reverse. But the conception is so grand, the excellence of the work so extraordinary, that the new attribution seems to have better claims than that hitherto received (the work had been regarded by some as a portrait of Alberti by himself, by others as the work of Matteo Pasti).

With Pisanello's work begins the continuous series of Quattrocento medals. In his wanderings throughout the whole of Italy he carried his new art from Verona to Naples, and owing to it, much more than to his paintings, everywhere won disciples to the realism of North Italy, so different from the realism of Florence. He found the earliest and most numerous followers in Ferrara. The lords of Ferrara—if the first to embody the idea of the modern ruler, who recognises not rights alone, but also duties—were at the same time genuine sons of the Renaissance; so that (frequently out of all proportion to the limited resources of their public revenues and at the cost of severe taxation) they indulged their love of splendour and art, and sought to hand down their fame to posterity by artistic works. And that the seeds planted with



## Italian Medals

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such intention in native soil—in the first instance by foreign hands—flourished also at home is shown by the works of Ferrarese medallists as well as of the Ferrarese school of painting. The names and creations of a Pleiad of such men, all more or less followers of Pisano, and all of whom found ample occupation and reward at the Court of the Este, have been handed down to us. After 1441 Niccolò Baroncelli, a sculptor of Florentine origin, several of whose ably executed statues in bronze are preserved in the cathedral of Ferrara, cast a medal of Lionello, full of character and inspired by Pisanello; indeed, the design of the reverse is directly borrowed from one of the master's. Amadeo da Milano, who was especially esteemed as a goldsmith, betrays himself as such by a strong relief, by the elegant, almost timid, treatment and careful chasing in the medals which he made of Lionello and Borso d'Este in the forties. On the reverse of one of the Lionello medals, like Baroncelli, he copies Pisanello; while the reverse of his second medal, with Leda and the swan, is a naïvely conceived, but skilfully composed circular design.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [This reverse is by most authorities considered to be of later date than the obverse. Cp. Heiss, p. 15.—G. F. H.]



DON INIGO D'AVALES. BY PISANO





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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The most important of the native masters, however, is Antonio Marescotti, of whose life, as well as of the lives of the two of whom we have spoken, we know nothing. The seven medals which he has left us bear the dates 1446-1462, and display the portraits of two members of his family, of a Bishop of Ferrara, Duke Sforza of Milan, and Borso d'Este. Finer than these, however, are two medals of San Bernardino of Siena, the zealous reformer of the Franciscan Order, the eloquent and influential wandering preacher, who had sojourned in Ferrara in 1431. Marescotti's medals of the saint, however, cannot have been cast until after his beatification in 1450, since they show his head surrounded by a halo; all the more remarkable is the truthfulness of the portrait, which was not taken from the life, and in which the ascetic piety of the saint is so touchingly expressed (Pl. VII., 5). All the works of Marescotti show something of the severe realism, the strong modelling of Pisanello. Although in this among all Pisanello's successors he approaches nearest to the master, nevertheless he is far from attaining the grand style, the monumental conception, which go hand in hand with these qualities in the Veronese. The insignificant reverses cannot in the least



## Italian Medals

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compare with Pisanello's either in choice of subject, in concentration of composition, or, finally, in the mighty cast of the figures. They display for the most part nothing but emblems: thus the medal of San Bernardino bears only the so-called Chrism of his order—the monogram of the Saviour ("Y.H.S.") enclosed in a nimbus of flames.

Weaker and more indistinct in form and conception are the likenesses of Duke Borso on the medals of Giacomo Lixignolo and Petricini, of Florence, dated 1460 (Pl. VII., 6); likewise that of Borso's successor, Ercole I., on the medals made twelve years later by Baldassare Estense, a natural scion of the princely house, who seems to have practised art simply as an amateur; finally, on the medal of M. Coradini, of whose work this single specimen (Pl. VIII., 1) and nothing more is known. Its reverse, partly inspired by a coin of Hadrian, shows the figure of the mythological patron of the Duke, as with shield and spear boldly planted he subdues the waves of the sea beside the pillars that bear his name. To pass over a number of anonymous artists, with whom for the most part we are only acquainted in their medals (frequently of excellent workmanship), depicting for the most part members of the



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PISANO, MARESCOTTI, PETRICINI, ETC.





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reigning house, the series of those already named is followed, chronologically speaking, by a highly renowned master of our branch of art, Sperandio of Mantua. But as Ferrara was for scarcely a decade the scene of his labours (1467-1476), and as, on the other hand, he made a much longer sojourn at Bologna, we prefer to treat of him later in company with the Bolognese medallists.

On the other hand, we may here appropriately place two artists from distant Naples, whose inspiration is directly due to the influence of Pisanello. As architects and sculptors Pietro da Milano (*circa* 1410-1473) and Francesco Laurana (*circa* 1430-1501), whose family came from the place of the same name near Zara, in Dalmatia, were in the service of Alfonso of Naples and his son Ferdinand I. Pietro was the creator of the triumphal arch which was erected after 1455 by King Alfonso at Castel Nuovo to commemorate his seizure of the capital, but which was not finished until the reign of his successor. It is the finest architectural monument of the Renaissance which remains in Naples. Laurana with several other artists took part in its sculptured decoration. But as



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medallists both men were employed especially in the service of Alfonso's rival and pretender to the kingdom of the two Sicilies, René of Anjou, Count of Provence. This prince, one of the few who, north of the Alps, vied with the Italian rulers as a splendid Maecenas of arts and letters, collected around him at his Courts of Aix and Bar-le-duc a legion of poets, scholars, and artists. With them he himself contended in poetry and painting, so that in the joint productions of the courtly band it is frequently difficult to distinguish the work of the patron from that of his protégés. When after Alfonso's death (1458) the building of his triumphal arch was brought to a stand, our two artists obeyed René's summons and went to France, there by their medals to provide for the glorification of the love affairs of the elderly monarch at the Court of Love of Provence.

Their works, produced between the years 1461 and 1466, display the portraits of René and his second wife Jeanne de Laval, his nearest relations and most trusted counsellors, as also those of Louis XI., King of France. In the matter of artistic merit, a huge gulf divides their works from those of Pisanello, although his medals of King Alfonso undoubtedly served as



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CORADINI, PIETRO DA MILANO, LAURANA





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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their immediate model. And if either one or other achieves success, then is the credit due more to the source whence they derived their inspiration than to themselves. In Pietro da Milano more especially the dependence on Pisano may frequently be traced even in the designs on the reverses of his medals. In the case of the double medal of René and his wife (Pl. VIII., 2) we are interested less by the vulgar portraits on the obverse, treated with uniform, flat, and expressionless relief, than by the not unskillful composition of the Council scene on the reverse, with its rich Renaissance architecture, the first of its kind on a medal, which betrays the practised hand of the architect. Laurana took less trouble about his designs; on his medal of John of Anjou, the son of René, he simply copies the circular temple of Vesta at Tivoli, and, as an addition of his own, crowns it with a statue of the Archangel Michael. In other cases also he readily allows himself to draw his inspiration from the antique: the *Spes Augusti* of his medal of René and the *Concordia Augusta* of that of Louis XI. (Pl. VIII., 3) are almost literal copies of Roman imperial coins. The last-named medal is, however, Laurana's masterpiece. The cunning craftiness, the suspicion, but at



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the same time the resolution of this, the first modern despot and incarnate reaction against the ideals and weaknesses of the Middle Ages, are excellently expressed in the portrait. Nevertheless Laurana fails by a long way to reach Pisano's grandeur of style, strength of modelling, and mastery of technique; in their place he displays now an over-careful, now a superficial imitation of nature, in general a stiff arrangement of the reverse, a flat and characterless treatment of the relief.

Let us return, however, to the home of Pisanello, to Verona, to trace his successors. There we immediately encounter in Matteo de' Pasti an artist who is probably a pupil of the master himself. Born at Verona in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, he meets us with his teacher at Ferrara in 1444, where he fashioned the portrait—so characteristic in its ugliness—of the tutor of princes, the renowned Greek scholar Guarino, then in his seventy-fifth year, and like himself a native of Verona (Pl. XI., 1). As early as the following year he accompanied Pisano to the Court of Sigismondo Malatesta at Rimini, where as architect, sculptor, decorator,



SIGISMONDO MALATESTA. BY PASTI.





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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painter, draftsman, and medallist, he soon rose to the position of an artistic factotum. Not until 1483, long after the death of his princely patron, did he return to his native city, where he died in 1490. Whether he responded to the summons of the Sultan Mohammed II. at Constantinople *ad se pingendum effingendumque*, cannot be ascertained.<sup>1</sup> From 1447 onwards he superintended at Rimini the building, designed by Leone Battista Alberti, of S. Francesco, the well-known Temple of Fame of Malatesta, and at the same time made the medal of Alberti, the dry style of which, however, contrasts very unfavourably with the life displayed in the medal of Guarino. Some other early Veronese works, the medals of Maffei and Benedetto Pasti, in their vigorous realism also approach much more nearly to Pisano than do Pasti's later works. On the whole, we cannot agree in the opinion of Friedländer and Heiss, who among all the masters of the Quattrocento rank him second only to Pisano. Goethe forms a more just estimate, when he finds him distinguished by tenderness, repose, simplicity, naïveté as well as great carefulness, almost

<sup>1</sup> [It appears from a letter, of which an extract is published in *L'Arte*, iii. p. 145, that Matteo only went as far as Candia, whence he was obliged to return.—G. F. H.]



## Italian Medals

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amounting to timidity, in the presentation of his details. His portraits in general have not the vivid life and the grand ideal cast of those of his master: rather do they show for the most part a certain limitation in conception and a dryness of modelling. But it is especially in the reverses that he proves himself far inferior to Pisanello in inventive genius and overflowing wealth of composition, as also in technical finish in the treatment of the relief; indeed, in these respects he becomes sometimes flat and insignificant. When he attempts an entirely ideal subject he degenerates into feebleness and prettiness, as we see by his medal of Christ. Nevertheless in moments of inspiration he produced one or two such master-pieces as the finely finished head of Sigismondo as "*Potior-cetes semper invictus*," a valuable and unique specimen in the Berlin Cabinet, and the best of all the medals which Pasti made of the tyrant of Rimini<sup>1</sup> (Pl. XI., 2). For, as was proper, our artist was obliged to place his highest talent at

<sup>1</sup> And yet how much of the essential character of the despot has been sacrificed in Pasti's conception, when compared to the medal of Pisano reproduced above! Notice the outline of the skull altered to adjust it to the circular form of the medal, the elegant crimping of the hair, the loppish laurel-wreath, which almost transform the fierce tyrant into a *petit-maitre* of the Quattrocento! [A better-known medal by Pasti of Sigismondo, with the Rocca Malatestiana on the reverse, is illustrated in Plate IX.—G. F. H.]



ISOTTA DEGLI ATTI. BY PASTI





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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the service of his lord and his house ; and thus, as products of his Renaissance period, we possess besides the medal of Alberti, only medals of Malatesta (and there are a dozen) and of the lady who was first his mistress and afterwards his wife, Isotta degli Atti (of whom there are eight different portraits). Divinised by Sigismondo in a monument erected to her during her lifetime with the inscription, " *Divae Isottae Sacrum*," celebrated by him and by the swarm of dependent poets in the elegies of the " *Isottaei* " on account of her intellectual excellences no less than of her personal charms, Isotta nevertheless on Pasti's medal (Pl. X.) appears to us in by no means so extraordinary a light. In her features we can trace kindness and enjoyment of life, and can perceive the expression of an intelligent mind ; but we search in vain for greatness or the stamp of princely nobility, and are still more unwilling to allow her the charm of intoxicating beauty. The elephant, however, which appears so frequently on the reverse of her medals, symbolises her ruler and husband ; he had chosen it with the motto, " *Elephas Indus Culices Non Timet*," for his device, or " *impresa*," as it was called in the Quattrocento. Here also the Weimar dilettanti have allowed them-



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selves to be carried away in their enthusiasm, when they call the medal of Isotta, "as we may say, unique in feeling, sincerity, and attractive antique simplicity of representation."

Besides Matteo de' Pasti, strange to say, the art of Pisano produced no followers in his native city. Pasti's successors there belong in date, as well as in the style of their works, to the beginning of the Cinquecento, and we shall therefore be obliged to return to them later.

On the other hand, the great Veronese found in neighbouring Mantua immediate successors, although, indeed, in the sequel their style was determined also by other influences. He himself had, as documents prove, repeatedly dwelt in Mantua, for the last time in 1447. The earliest medallist whom we encounter there after him, signing himself on his works as "Petrus domo Fani," belonged to the little town of this name situated between Ancona and Pesaro. His medal of the Marquis Lodovico Gonzaga (Pl. XI., 3), the intelligent Maecenas, who succeeded in attracting to his little Court geniuses of the stamp of a Donatello, an Alberti, a Mantegna, shows strong traces of the spirit of Pisanello, not only in the lifelike and grandly



PASTI, PIETRO DA FANO





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

conceived portrait, but still more in the vigorous, simple composition of the reverse, although its meaning is not so clear as that of Pisano's allegories. Are we intended to find in the legend "*Noli me tangere*" an allusion to Lodovico's confidence against any attack of the God of Love and at the same time a promise of fidelity to his wife, Barbara of Brandenburg? The Cupid on the reverse, and the title of lieutenant of the Duke of Milan in the legend on the obverse, fix the date of the medal between 1452 and 1457.<sup>1</sup> This agrees with the date of the other known medals of our artist, those of the Doge Pasquale Malipieri (1457-62) and his wife, which show the same characteristic excellence and power of expression as those of the Gonzaga. These unique specimens of the Turin and Berlin collections show at the same time that Pietro afterwards transferred his residence to Venice, where, however, every trace of him is lost.

The earliest of Mantua's native medallists is Bartolomeo

<sup>1</sup> Two medals by Boldù (whom we shall deal with under Venice), dated 1458 and 1466, reproduce with some slight deviations the Cupid of the Gonzaga medals. But as during these years Lodovico was no longer lieutenant of Sforza, his medal must have been the earlier in date, and not imitated from those of Boldù. Moreover, in this case the portrait, which represents the Marquis as from thirty-five to forty years of age, would not accord with the date of his birth (1414).



## Italian Medals

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Melioli (1448-1514). His chief energies were displayed as goldsmith, later also as Warden of the Marquis's mint. His five medals—not counting that of Christian, King of Denmark, who passed through Mantua on his way to Rome in 1474—all depict members of the reigning family: the Marquis Lodovico, his son of the same name, Bishop of Mantua (both cast in 1475), as also his grandchildren Maddalena and Gianfrancesco II. (Pl. XII., 1), cast before 1484 and before he entered on his rule. The portraits on these pieces in external respects already differ from those of Pisano and his followers, in that they are no longer cut off in a more or less straight line at the bottom, but that in imitation of antique portrait busts they show a deep bust, clad in armour with a slanting truncation. This ought not to surprise us when we remember the reverence, bordering on worship, with which in the home of Virgil men honoured the antique, and how eagerly its remains were collected. We may also give credit to the goldsmith's art of Melioli for the excessively detailed ornamental work covering the armour, although it too much exalts the subordinate at the expense of the essential. But unfortunately his capacity for such



## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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externalities is not counterbalanced by vigorous characterisation of the personality or significant working out of allegories. Far superior to him—not perhaps in the latter respect, but in the stronger, though perhaps more prosaic, characterisation and modelling—is his contemporary, Bartolomeo Talpa, who was frequently employed as decorator in the palaces and villas of the Gonzagas. To him we owe the signed medals of the Marquis Federigo I. (1478–1484) (Pl. XII., 2) and of his son Gianfrancesco II. (after 1495); and besides these perhaps the finer unsigned medal of Julia Astalla (Pl. XII., 4), the girl who, as a novella of Bandello tells us, having been outraged by a servant of the Bishop of Mantua, threw herself into the waters of the Oglio, and was honoured by the Bishop with a monument in the public market-place.<sup>1</sup> Gianfrancesco Ruberto, whose art is entirely dependent on that of Melioli, as also a number of medals of the reigning house, most of them by unknown masters, must be but cursorily mentioned, in order that we may bestow the greater attention on the works of the most important native master.

<sup>1</sup> [Dr. Bode, *Zeitschr. f. Bild. Kunst*, Nov., 1903, p. 33, points out that the connection of the medal with this story is conjectural.—G. F. H.]



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This is Jacopo Ilario (or Alari) Bonacolsi, surnamed l'Antico (*circa* 1460-1528), who was also variously employed by his prince as goldsmith, sculptor, and metal-founder. With the latter name he signed (soon after 1480) his medals of Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, lord of Sabionetta, and his wife, Antonia del Balzo (Pl. XII., 5). Similar to these in style, arrangement of externals, the border of pearls (*grènetis*) round the edge, and even in the form of the letters of the inscription, are the medal of an otherwise unknown Magdalena Mantuana (Pl. XII., 3), dated *Die XX. Novembris, 1504*; another of the Duke Francesco della Rovere of Urbino (after 1516); finally, that of the Marchese Ferrante d'Avalos and his wife, Vittoria Colonna, the celebrated poetess and the friend of Michael Angelo (made apparently between 1521 and 1525); so similar, that we must claim them—as we do here for the first time—for the master.

In all Antico's work we are attracted no less by the austere grace of the likenesses, where none of the warm vitality is sacrificed in spite of a slight tinge of mannerism, than by the composition of the reverses, which is inspired by the antique. Thus, on the Balzo medal, the all but wrecked ship

## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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of her life is drawn through the waves by Love and Poetry (Cupid and two Pegasi), guided by Hope; and on that of her husband we see Fortune led by Mars and Minerva, which is meant to tell us that Gianfrancesco's fortunate career was not due to blind chance, but was owing to his own sagacity and courage. In these compositions the master has studied a delicate elaboration of the figures, while with true artistic feeling he avoids impressing on the flatter relief of his portraits, by over-minute treatment of details, the stamp of mechanical aridity.

Strongly influenced by Antico, but surpassing him in almost every respect, appears an artist whom, in spite of his foreign origin, we must rank here, since the most important part of his career belongs to Milan and Mantua. Giancristoforo Romano (*circa* 1465-1512) represents in the third generation a family of artists which, in his grandfather, Pippo Gante at Pisa, and in his father Isaia of Pisa, in Rome, had furnished distinguished masters of sculpture. From 1491-1497 we find Giancristoforo occupied with important works of plastic art at the Court of Milan, from that time until the end of 1505 in Mantua, where in 1498 he



## Italian Medals

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made the medal of the Marchioness Isabella, his particular patroness' (Pl. XII., 6). Recalled by Pope Julius II. to his native city, he designed there the Pope's medal (Pl. XII., 7) in 1506; also, in the following year at Naples, that of Isabella of Aragon, widow of Giangaleazzo Maria Sforza, who had been dethroned by Lodovico il Moro. After a passing sojourn at the Court of Urbino, where—accomplished courtier that he was—he won all hearts, especially by his musical and poetic endowments, he was entrusted in 1509 with the position of architect of the Cathedral at Loreto, where he died in the course of three years in the prime of life, a victim of the terrible disease which had been brought to Italy by the army of Charles VIII.

A document only recently discovered has shown the master to be the author of the three medals already mentioned. All

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the sympathetic personality of the Marchioness, honoured throughout Italy, as well as to the excellence of the medal as an artistic achievement, it became so popular and was so much sought after that in 1505 Gianfratoforo was obliged to issue a replica—the only instance known to us of an artist personally supervising a second edition of a medal. It deviates in a few features—the aquiline nose, the slightly projecting lower lip, the different necklace, the sharply defined edge of the bodice—from the original treatment, as is clearly evident from the example (in a gold frame set with jewels) in the Cabinet of Vienna. The reverse remained entirely unaltered in the replica.



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MELIOLI, TALPA L'ANTICO, GIANCHRISTOFORO ROMANO

*Ant. p. 52*





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three are inspired with a grace hitherto unknown in works of the kind—even the "Papa terrible" has acquired an expression of fatherly bonhomie in Romano's presentation. The relief is, at the same time, modelled with unusual delicacy, even a little affected nicety is not disdained: for example, the veil, which reveals rather than hides the features of Duchess Isabella, which the contemporary letter already mentioned extols as "*cosa molto artificiosa*." The allegories of the reverses, in their carefully thought out composition, breathing throughout the keenest sense of beauty both in motive and form, are likewise jewels of their kind: inspired in both respects by the antique, they nevertheless forfeit nothing of their attractive individual cachet. The proudly standing Goddess of Victory of the Gonzaga medal, with her Coan draperies flowing round her; the indescribably graceful seated nude maiden on the Aragon medal, a marvel of expression and modelling on so small a scale; Peace and Faith joining hands in alliance over the sacrificial fire on the medal of Julius—all are perfectly finished pictures. With entire justice does the witness already mentioned say that they "*ad iudicio di ogni intelligente alli boni antichi se possono comparar,*" since not only in motive, but in



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their innermost being they breathe the spirit of the antique. True, their composition has been dictated by an entirely different principle from the realism which in Pisano appeals to us with elemental power. We already stand confronted with the Cinquecento view of the world and art!

Besides these three undoubted pieces, some others have been quite recently added to the number of his works. Hitherto they had been attributed to an anonymous artist (or even, without any justification, to the Florentine painter, Filippino Lippi). On the ground of their great similarity in style, the time and place of their origin, the ties of relationship or friendship which existed between the persons depicted, W. Bode has recognised the hand of Giancristoforo Romano in the medals of Alfonso I. of Este (Pl. XIII., 3) and of his wife, Lucrezia Borgia (Pl. XIII., 1), as well as in those of the otherwise unknown Jacopa Correggia (Pl. XIII., 2), Maddalena de' Rossi and F. Francina. The medals of the Este couple were made in the year 1503, while one of the three redactions of the medal of Lucrezia, deviating by some slight alterations from the original, is not earlier than 1505. The assumption that the artist made the former in Mantua, the latter when passing

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through Ferrara on his way to Rome, has every show of probability, since Alfonso and his wife were brother and sister-in-law of the artist's patroness, Isabella Gonzaga. It is likewise known that the families of the Correggio and Rossi of Parma were related or on friendly terms with the Gonzaga and Este. Decisive, however, is the criterion of style. The medals of Jacopa and Maddalena still retain much of the character of L'Antico—in the latter his realistic force, in the former the delight in emphasising the ornament in costume and head-dress (see his Balzo medal); while in grace and delicacy of modelling both medals far surpass the earlier artist's skill. Now the portraits of Lucrezia have so much in common with those of Isabella Gonzaga both in style and arrangement, and that of Alfonso, more especially in its soft modelling, so vividly recalls the portrait on the medal of Julius, that the attribution of the pieces to the same hand seems almost irrefutable. It is true that the perfectly charming representation of captive Cupid on the reverse of one of the medals of Lucrezia seems, in its free pictorial composition, to contrast with the severe plastic manner of the pieces certainly made by Giancristoforo Romano. Nevertheless it is more nearly ap-



## Italian Medals

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proached by the earlier redaction of the Cupid scene on the Correggio and Rossi medals, and it is by no means inexplicable that the scene should be developed later in a more picturesque form. Above all, however, it is the same spirit of exquisite grace and deep sense of beauty that connects the fettered Cupid with the allegories of the undoubted pieces. Not without reason has so accomplished a judge as Friedländer pronounced the medal adorned by this scene "one of the most beautiful, most charming, and most rare."

In addition to these pieces, restored to our master by Bode, we are inclined to ascribe to him the medal of the youthful Cardinal Domenico Grimani. Hitherto it has been regarded as a work of the Venetian medallist Vittore Gambello, probably on the sole ground that Gambello made a medal of the same personage in more advanced years, on the reverse of which the composition of the type of the earlier medal was copied exactly (see below, where we shall speak of Gambello at greater length). In style, however, the two pieces are worlds apart! While the latter may be classed with Gambello's other works, the former shows many points of similarity with the medals of Giancristoforo, even to the form

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of the letters and the peculiarity that the letters on the reverse are smaller and thicker than those on the obverse. Moreover, the subject on the reverse, Theology and Philosophy, symbolised by two female figures, most strikingly corresponds, both in composition and outline, with those on the other medals of the master, but has not the smallest resemblance to Gambello's style, as a comparison between this and the repetition of the same composition on his Grimani medal clearly shows. Since Giancristoforo's medal represents Grimani, who became cardinal in 1493 at the age of thirty, as at the most thirty-five years of age, it must have been made during the artist's Mantuan period, while on some chance visit to Venice, where the Cardinal may also have been accidentally at the time. That, however, his later medal, which represents him at the age of fifty to fifty-five, repeats the design on the reverse of the earlier piece was perhaps due to some express wish of the sitter. According to what we have just said, these medals must have been made about 1515; in fact (as we shall presently see), Gambello was occupied in Rome at the Papal Mint from 1515 to 1517.

The series of Quattrocento medallists in Mantua closes in



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Gian Marco Cavalli (born in Mantuan territory in 1450). Employed from 1481 onwards at the Gonzaga Court as goldsmith, engraver, and sculptor in bronze, he was also active as a die-engraver after 1497, and in 1506 was summoned by the Emperor Maximilian I. to Hall in Tyrol, the seat of the most important mint in the emperor's hereditary dominions, to prepare dies for the new coinage. Not only do many examples of this new issue still exist, but we also possess the so-called *testone*, *i.e.* the cast of the wax model on a large scale, which served as a model in the cutting of the steel die (Pl. XIII., 4). The two examples extant in Vienna and Berlin display on the obverse the portraits jugate of the imperial pair (the sketches—taken from life—for the design are preserved in the Accademia at Venice); on the reverse is the Virgin suckling the Holy Child surrounded by a glory of cherubs' heads. In the severe treatment of the heads the example of L'Antico is unmistakably recognisable, while the reverse is conceived in a thoroughly pictorial spirit. A later work of Cavalli shows a freer, more lifelike conception and a more vigorous, more finely elaborated relief. This is the beautiful medal of the Carmelite monk, Battista Spagnoli, a member of a noble family in Mantua,

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highly esteemed in his time as a versifier of incredible fertility (Pl. XIII., 5). Since Spagnoli, born in 1448, is represented in old age, and yet in the inscription is not designated as the General of his Order, we may place the date of the medal shortly before 1513. The intimacy which existed between the poet and the sculptor, and to which an epigram of the former bears witness, has made it possible to attribute to Cavalli not only the medal of Spagnoli, but also his bust in bronze in the Berlin Museum. The similarity in style, again, between this work and the well-known bust of Mantegna over his grave in S. Andrea in Mantua, has made the supposition that Cavalli was also the sculptor of the latter all the more probable, since he was chosen by the celebrated painter to act as executor of his last will. In this case we have to recognise in our medalist the foremost bronze sculptor in Mantua.<sup>1</sup>

When we consider the wealth of Mantua in medallists, the poverty of Padua seems doubly surprising. For Padua was the earliest and most zealous foster-mother of every kind of cult of the antique in North Italy; within her walls had

<sup>1</sup> The similarity of style between the medal of the Mantuan jurist Francesco Bonatti and that of Spagnoli is so great that we are inclined to assume the former also to have been a work of Cavalli.



## Italian Medals

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originated the first products of the newly reawakened art, and later, at the same time as Pisano was propagating the new tendency, she had become, thanks to the genius of Donatello, the seat of an extraordinarily vigorous artistic activity, in which the art of casting in bronze was almost exclusively employed. This art afterwards flourished uninterruptedly in Padua on into the Cinquecento not only in the higher art, but also in more trivial minor works. Witness to this activity is to be found in the innumerable plaques, *baisers de paix*, caskets, inkstands, candelabra, bells, lamps, and the like, of the Paduan school of metal-founders. But not until the sixteenth century was in full course did the art of the medallist rise to its full activity in this city; in the Quattrocento we have to record the names of only two representatives of the art: Bartolomeo Bellano (*circa* 1430-98) and Andrea Briosco called Riccio (1470-1532).

Bellano's artistic career was a varied one. As a pupil of Donatello, during the master's residence in Padua, he was summoned by him (about 1460) to Florence, to aid him in his last great work, the pulpit of San Lorenzo. After Donatello's death he went to Rome to make medals for Paul II. In 1467

## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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he erected the bronze monument to the Pope in Perugia; he then returned to his native city, where, from 1469 onwards, we find him occupied with important works of sculpture in marble and bronze, more particularly for the church of S. Antonio. His sojourn was only once again briefly interrupted (in 1479 or 1480) by a summons to Constantinople from the Sultan Mohammed II. No signed medals can be attributed to Bellano; but, on Vasari's evidence, among the many that were cast for Paul II., those that refer to the Council of the year 1466 may best be ascribed to him (Pl. XIII., 6). Of this medal the Weimar connoisseurs express a highly favourable opinion: "The portrait of the Pope has a noble, aspiring character, is well drawn, in strong relief, smoothly and flowingly treated. The eye of the beholder is delighted with the harmonious effect of the whole, as with the intellectual truthfulness of the portrait." With still greater probability does Vasari attribute to the artist the medal of the celebrated professor of jurisprudence, Antonio Rozeelli or Roselli (1378-1466). For he had carved Roselli's monument in Sant' Antonio. The medal, which shows us Roselli as an aged man, must have been made about 1460. It is thoughtfully



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conceived and has an entirely naturalistic treatment of the relief, that betrays the disciple of Donatello (Pl. XIII., 7).

Andrea Riccio, a pupil of Bellano, is especially known in the history of art as the creator of the world-renowned candelabrum in the Santo at Padua; he was, however, also known as a sculptor of figure subjects (among other things the tomb of Della Torre at Verona, some reliefs in the Santo and in the Academy at Venice; particularly, however, in numerous works of decorative minor art of the kind mentioned above). The medal with his likeness (Pl. XIII., 8), in the inscription of which the Italian nickname derived from his curly hair is translated into its Latin equivalent, "Crispus," is, it is true, not signed. Nevertheless, not only because of the correspondence in the features with those of the bust in relief on the candelabrum in the church of the Santo, but equally owing to the resemblance of style between the two works, no doubt has ever existed that the medal is the work of Riccio himself. It shows the same strongly defined conception of the type, the decided characterisation, bordering on the rude, which frequently obtrude themselves in his figures; nevertheless the work is full of power and life, and still entirely in the



GIANCRISTOFORO ROMANO, CAVALLI, BELLANO, RICCIO





## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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spirit of the Quattrocento. Of some of the other medals conjecturally ascribed to the master, that of Girolamo Donato, the Venetian envoy at the Curia (Pl. XIII., 9), has the greatest evidence of probability in its favour, since it was for Donato that Riccio made in 1492 the five reliefs (still preserved in the Accademia at Venice) for the altar in the Church of the Servites in his native city. Less by the portrait, which is somewhat tame for our artist, than by the excellently composed and cast reverse with the figure (difficult, however, to explain) of a handsome sleeping youth, from whom two Cupids are engaged in trying to steal divine wisdom from a half-opened book, the medal reveals many points of resemblance with other allegorical scenes in Riccio's plaques; indeed, it has itself been repeated in the form of a plaque.

At the close of our wanderings through North Italy, let us return again to our starting-point, Verona. The medallists whom we find employed here in the second and third decades of the Cinquecento have, it is true, nothing in common with the art of Pisanello; neither are they affected by the style of the influential head of the Paduan school—Andrea Man-



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tegna. Their models are rather to be sought among the later medallists of Venice (see below), as also among the masters of the local school of painters, which was now at its zenith. It is accordingly a member of the latter school whom we first meet with — Gian Francesco Caroto (1470-1546), with his solitary medal of the young hereditary Marquis of Monferrato of the year 1518 (Pl. XIV., 1). Four years before, Caroto had been summoned to execute the frescoes at Casale Monferrato, on which he was long engaged. His signed medal, which Vasari has already recorded, is an original work, not only in the portrait, conceived in a vividly pictorial manner, of the princely boy, but especially in "the extraordinarily bold and majestic style, which recalls that of Michael Angelo, of the drawing of the design on the reverse" (Friedländer). Hercules is represented punishing Vice, represented by a nude woman with a bag of money in her hand. If in the person depicted we are here dealing with a boy scarcely beyond the years of childhood, the inscription on a second medal of Veronese origin, again a unique piece, proclaims the artist Franc. Maria Teperello himself a "little boy." The statement, however, is not to be taken literally, for his medal of the Bellunese scholar

## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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Lodovico da Ponte (1467-1520), although no very striking work, is by no means that of a boyish hand.

Much more important, both in number and value, are the works of the goldsmith, painter, and engraver, Gian Maria Pomedello. Concerning his life we are entirely ignorant. Judging from the persons whom he has immortalised, it would appear that he worked not only in his native city, but also in Mantua, Vicenza, and Venice. His fourteen medals, for the most part signed, date from 1517 to 1527; his engravings on copper from 1534. The earliest of the medals, those of Maximilian I., Charles V., and Francis I. of France, probably owed their origin to the conclusion of the peace of 1517, which put an end to the long-continued siege of Verona. Those of Charles and Francis I. are probably the earliest that we possess of these sovereigns. On the other hand, the tiny medal with Pomedello's own likeness (Pl. XIV., 2) is to be assigned to his later years, not only on account of the age at which he is depicted, but still more because of the freer conception and altogether excellent workmanship. In both respects it far surpasses the medals, extant in three redactions, of the noble Venetian lady, Isabella Sessa-Michiel (Pl. XIV., 3).



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The reverse of the latter, however, a gracefully poised and most delicately modelled goddess of fortune, is much more successful than the archaistic nude figure of Hercules, derived from Greek coins, on the reverse of his own portrait. We are, moreover, at a loss to understand the connection which the artist wished to indicate between himself and the ancient hero. In our opinion Friedländer seems to form a somewhat too favourable estimate of Pomedello's works when he says that "in composition and execution they rival the best."

Still more abundant is the work of the last of the Veronese medallists of the Quattrocento, Giulio della Torre (*circa* 1480-1540), the scion of a patrician house, which bestowed on its native city a series of distinguished physicians, jurists, and theologians. Our artist was himself an advocate, afterwards Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Padua. Although only an amateur in his art, he practised it with such love and industry that he has bequeathed to us no less than twenty signed pieces, and six which, although unsigned, are nevertheless undoubtedly from his hand. As is the custom of amateurs, he chiefly depicted the members of his own family (eight pieces); also some statesmen, patricians, and scholars

## Vittore Pisano and his Successors

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of Verona, as well as his colleagues at the University of Padua; and two painters. Strangely small—two only—is the number of his feminine portraits; one of these, however, is to be reckoned his best work. It is that of his daughter Beatrice, who reappears at full length with her four children in a well-conceived group on the reverse. His own likeness on his only dated medal (1527) is a successful work (Pl. XIV., 4); it shows, more especially in the treatment of the hair, the laboured carefulness of the dilettante. Less pleasing is the composition of the reverse, where the Genius of Justice is represented in a strained attitude and with clumsy gesture, della Torre in an affected pose; the folds of his robe as well as the chiton of his guide are very conventionally treated. Much more original and happy in its realism is the reverse of the medal of Bartolomeo Socino, a member of a celebrated Sienese family of jurists (Pl. XIV., 5). The representation of the teacher dispensing wisdom to his pupils *ex cathedra* (Socino was an ornament of the University of Padua) is a free and highly skilful modification of the subject that we encounter, in an entirely constrained form, on the tombs of mediæval professors at Bologna, Pistoja, Pisa, and elsewhere.



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In dignity of conception and monumental modelling, the portrait on the obverse also surpasses the more truthful likeness of della Torre himself.

Two other medallists, Matteo dal Nassaro (died 1548) and Gian Giacomo Caraglio (died 1551 or 1570), better known as an engraver, carried their talents to foreign lands; the former to the royal Court of France, the latter to that of Poland. They need not be further considered in relation to the medallic art of Italy. Until the end of the Cinquecento Verona produced no single other master that we can name, so that even in the second part of our work, dedicated to the struck medals of the sixteenth century, we shall have no occasion to return thither.



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III


THE MEDALLISTS OF VENICE, BOLOGNA  
AND NEIGHBOURHOOD





### III

## THE MEDALLISTS OF VENICE, BOLOGNA AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

HE spot which we now approach, the City of the Lagoons, is one more than commonly favourable to the display of the art of the medallist. Her extensive patriciate, the wealth of dignities and offices with which the republic encompassed herself, the immense number of pageants, anniversaries, and festivals, which were yearly celebrated for official reasons or in obedience to time-honoured traditions, the general bent of the populace towards the display of pomp and splendour—all were factors calculated to promote the advance of the new art. And for centuries also the soil had been directly prepared to receive it. As early as 1335 Oliviero Forzetta, a wealthy citizen of the neighbouring Treviso, a town subject to the republic, had founded a cabinet of antiquities; and in 1347 a monk of the Convent of



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San Niccolò had bequeathed to it his collection of antiques. Both collections must assuredly have contained specimens of Greek and Roman coins. The taste for the products of ancient art must also have been early awakened in Venice herself by her constant intercourse with the East: coins and gems were more especially collected. The Camaldolese monk, Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1439), one of the pioneers of the Florentine Renaissance, speaks in his letters with praise of a medal of Berenice and of a gold coin of Alexander the Great, which he had seen at the house of a distinguished Venetian. In Venice the far-travelled Cyriac of Ancona acquired a gem of the great King, and it was a Venetian, Pope Paul II., who amassed the most important and most valuable collection of coins and gems of which the Renaissance could boast.

We have already seen that the creator of the earliest medals is probably to be looked for in the Venetian family of die-engravers—the Sesti. Beginning with their productions, we can even at this day point to more than fifty Venetian medals by known artists, while the number of anonymous pieces is half as great again. But even in Venice

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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half a century passes away after the appearance of the Carrara medals before we encounter the first modern medal. Besides the anonymous portrait of Fra Mauro (who died 1459), the celebrated cosmographer and author of the map of the world, which we still admire in one of the halls of the ducal palace, the earliest Venetian medal is that of the unfortunate Doge Francesco Foscari, who, deprived of his dignities in 1457 after a reign of thirty-four years, died a few days afterwards of grief. It is a vigorous, if somewhat rude work, which in its reverse—Venetia clad in armour sitting enthroned on the lion-throne—is altogether inspired by the tendencies to the antique that prevailed at the time in Padua. The initials ("A N") of the artist are insufficient to dispel the obscurity of its origin.<sup>1</sup>

About the same time, however, we encounter in Marco Guidizzani the earliest artist, with whose name at least—thanks to his signature on three medals—we are acquainted. Beyond this, however, we know nothing concerning him, and can only ascertain that his works were produced between

<sup>1</sup> Whether the medal of the Doge Cristoforo Moro, signed "A N T," belongs to the same artist is doubtful on account of the difference in style.



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1450 and 1460. Among them the first place belongs undoubtedly to the medal of Bartolomeo Colleoni, Venice's "Marschall Vorwärts," whose magnificent equestrian statue looks down so commandingly from its slender pedestal in front of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. The medal (Pl. XIV., 6) brings into greater prominence the more humane and finer qualities of the hero, in whom his soldiers found a leader solicitous for their welfare, and his native Bergamo a benefactor of princely munificence during the peaceful last fifteen years of his life, which he spent in repose. To these qualities the inscription, as well as the somewhat ambiguous design on the reverse, refers. The plummet, of which the string is held by Colleoni, here depicted as a nude hero, is probably intended to symbolise his unswerving rectitude of judgment. The composition, which shows the inspiration of the antique, is not unskillfully designed; the relief is flat, but handled in a severely sculptural manner. The reverse of the Giustiniani medal, where a Bear (the emblem of the Giustiniani) is represented as reaching down the fruit of a palm tree (Peace) for the Lion (Venice) couched beside it, contains much of the monumental quality, although nothing

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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of the freedom and spirit of the similar animal scenes of Pisanello.

A weaker and more sentimental nature, more concerned with the graceful rhythm of outward form than the character of his subject, is Giovanni Boldù. In imitation probably of Pisano, he calls himself "Pictor" on his medals, although of his works as a painter no knowledge has descended to us. He also took pleasure in signing his name now in the Greek, now in the Hebrew language, a learned affectation that indicates the neighbourhood of Padua. To the same source may be traced his predilection for directly copying the examples of antiquity: thus the head of the young Caracalla from an imperial coin; Arion seated on the Dolphin from a didrachm of Tarentum; finally, Apollo with the Lyre (Pl. XV., 1), whom, on his medal of the unknown musician, Nicholas Schliefer, he took from the well-known Greek intaglio with the Judgment of Marsyas, known as the "Seal of Nero." It was this gem which Ghiberti mounted in a rich gold setting for the Cabinet of the Medici, and which is now to be seen in the museum at Naples. In one or other of the many Renaissance copies this celebrated gem may have met the eyes of our



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artist.<sup>1</sup> The fact that the greater number of his eight pieces, produced between 1457 and 1466, celebrate not statesmen and dignitaries, but poets and virtuosi, seems to indicate a vein of idealism in his character. This is also shown, when in one of his own portraits (Pl. XV., 2) Boldù idealises himself—again following the example of Roman coins—as a nude hero with the victor's crown in his hair. (It is interesting to compare this medal with a second portrait of himself, which is really true to life.) It is true that the sentimental lamentation (evidently of the artist himself) over the evanescence of earthly things, as symbolised by the skull on the reverse, is not in accordance with this treatment of himself, either from the standpoint of the spirit of the antique or (still less) from that of the Renaissance. Of the Cupid here transformed into the Genius of Death we have already spoken on p. 47. The Weimar dilettanti have on the whole excellently characterised the works of the master as "simple and pleasing in mode of representation, ingenious in expression, freer, easier, and executed in more cultivated taste than the works of Pasti."

<sup>1</sup> Compare on this point E. Müntz, *Les Précurseurs de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1882, p. 196; p. 192 of the same work gives an excellent illustration of the gem.

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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In addition to this Boldù deserves the praise, doubly meritorious in a "painter," of severe sculpturesque relief and careful, intelligent modelling of the nude.

We must, however, hurriedly pass over the four signed medals of Doges by the mysterious artist "G. T. F."; and we can only mention the medal of Mohammed II., which Gentile Bellini, summoned to Constantinople in 1479, cast either there or immediately on his return, in addition to the portrait of the Sultan, which is still preserved. Instead, we reproduce the far more excellent medal (Pl. XV., 3) which is signed and dated (1481) by a totally unknown master Constantius. This, if any medal, is conspicuous above its contemporaries, not only on account of its size (12 cm. in diameter), but because in grandeur of conception, telling expression, and vivacity of representation, combined with excellent and broad modelling, it approaches so near to Pisanello that we can scarcely be surprised that it was ascribed to him by Vasari.

Of an entirely different character are the works of Fra Antonio da Brescia, of whom nothing is known beyond the place of his birth. Judging from the seven portrait medals which he has left, he must have worked in Venice and its



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neighbourhood, and that from the year 1487 until 1513. Our first impression on looking at his medals (Pl. XV., 4), as is also the case with the portraits of his Bergamasc neighbour, Giovanni Battista Moroni, is: precisely so must the nobles, procurators, and canons here depicted have looked during life! So convincingly does the absolutely photographic fidelity of the portraits force itself on the beholder. The master, it is true, was obliged to pay a heavy penalty for his keen grasp of the actual in the scenes on his reverses, so awkwardly composed, so hard, occasionally so ill-modelled, are his allegorical figures.

Contemporary with the monk of Brescia, though beginning earlier and ending later, Vittore Gambello or Camelio displayed great energy as goldsmith, die-engraver, bronze sculptor, and medallist. His earliest medal, that of Sixtus IV., must have been made before 1484; his latest, that of the Doge Andrea Gritti, is of the year 1523. In his early works, such as the portraits of the two artist brothers Gentile and Giovanni Bellini (Pl. XV., 5, XVI., 1), he still displays the vigorous realistic conception of the Quattrocento; in his later he becomes weaker in expression, more indistinct in modelling.



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BOLDU, CONSTANTIUS, FRA ANTONIO DA BRESCIA, GAMBELLO





## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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See, for instance, the medal already mentioned (p. 56) of the Cardinal Domenico Grimani (Pl. XVI., 2), the most brilliant Maecenas of Venice, who bequeathed to the museum of the ducal palace his collection of ancient statues, and to whom the library owes the breviary of world-wide celebrity that bears his name. In the manner in which, on the reverse of the Grimani medal, Gambello has invested the composition of Giancristoforo Romano with his own individuality of style, his own expression of form, the weakness of the scenes on the reverses of his medals in general is clearly brought to light. We see that generalised beauty of form, going back to the imperfectly understood model of Greek relief, which governs all the later sculpture of Venice; the excessive precision in pose and gesture in which all direct living force is lost; the overdone, entirely pictorial scenes with elaborate effects of perspective, and subjects usually imitated from the antique, which reveal the absence of a refined perception of the qualities required by this branch of art. In his own likeness, the master follows strictly the lines of the Roman imperial coins. We possess two redactions of this portrait—one cast, the other struck. For besides his eight cast medals, he has left



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five more which were struck, of which that of Pope Julius II. of the year 1506 is the most successful. To him therefore belongs the credit—if such it be—not indeed of having been the first to attempt to revive the process of striking medals, for in this he had had some predecessors (see later under Fr. Enzola), but to him—we repeat—belongs the credit of having improved the method of striking to such a degree that a high relief could now be produced, such as is postulated by the medal as opposed to the coin. To him also belongs the further credit—more especially in his capacity of die-engraver for the Papal Mint from 1515 until 1517—of having brought the new process into practical, more productive application.

We content ourselves with the mere mention of the two very mediocre medals by the entirely unknown Giovanni Guido Agrippa (about 1510–1520) of the Doge Loredano. Of the eight pieces dated between 1534 and 1542 by Andrea Spinelli, who was born in Parma, and worked at Venice from 1534 to 1572 as Warden of the Mint, we reproduce the medal of the Senator Girolamo Zani (Pl. XVI., 3), whose portrait, with its stamp of commonplace fidelity, closely

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approaches the manner of Fra Antonio, while at the same time all the refinements of the stylistic treatment of the Cinquecento are already employed to bring into relief the sainted patron on the reverse. The design here is, moreover, borrowed from Dürer's large "St. Jerome in the Desert," probably the only instance of the German artist's influence on the works of the Italian medallists (Spinelli again repeats the same design on his medal of Girolamo Quirini).

We close the series of known medallists of the City of the Lagoons with the name of Alessandro Vittoria (1525-1608), who as architect and sculptor is, next to Sansovino, the most prominent figure among the artists of the Venetian Cinquecento. Although his works in the main belong to the period of transition between the Renaissance and the Barocco, nevertheless as medallist he claims his place here at the close of the Quattrocento, since in opposition to the process of striking, which is the characteristic of his contemporaries throughout the rest of Italy, he again adopted the old genuine technique of casting, and that, too, once more in all its excellence. In their spirit and conception, it is true, the medals of Vittoria—the earliest of his youthful works—



## Italian Medals

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belong, indeed, completely to the Cinquecento. But since the master—as is the case also in his imposing portrait busts—copied the actual with an artist's eye, he produced living representations of men of his own days. They are not staring portraits, mere hollow masks, for all their pretentiousness of style, such as, with many honourable exceptions, we find on the medals of the later Cinquecento. Can we imagine a more characteristically lifelike reproduction of the mighty personality of Pietro Aretino—the dreaded pamphleteer, “the Scourge of Princes,” as in his overweening vanity he loved to call himself, who, thanks to his mendacious and filthy, no less than shameless and sarcastic pen, maintained his place in the foremost rank of the celebrities of his time? (Pl. XVI., 4). Or than the perhaps too freely draped bust “sans phrase” of Maddalena Liomparda, probably one of the numerous mistresses of Aretino, and the two remaining signed pieces by our artist? (Pl. XVI. 5.) Besides these, to him we would also ascribe the four unsigned medals of Tomaso Rangone, the celebrated physician and scholar (who died in 1557). A member of the Ravenna family of Gianozzi, he only acquired the name of the noble Modenese

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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house from Guido Rangone, lord of Spilimbergo, in Friuli, who on the occasion of a severe illness owed his life to the physician's care. Not only the similarity of style, but also personal relations of many kinds existing between the artist and scholar speak in favour of our attribution. In 1562, the year when one of the Rangone medals was produced, Vittoria was received into the Confraternity of San Marco, when—according to the inscription—Tomaso presided over the Brotherhood as Guardian. And as early as 1553 Vittoria, in company with Sansovino, was entrusted by Rangone with the architectural and sculptural restoration of the church of S. Giuliano. Finally, Rangone's bust, carved by our artist at a later period, is preserved in the Correr Museum. The correct interpretation of the beautiful reverse of two of the Rangone medals (Pl. XVI., 6), representing the birth of Hebe, we owe to A. von Sallet, the late Director of the Berlin Cabinet. Weaker in execution, but more animated in expression, is the largest of the Rangone medals (diameter 53 mm.), its reverse—a female figure crowning a bull—a marvel of modelling in the light and even low relief.



## Italian Medals

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But how in the limited space at our disposal are we to make a selection among the anonymous masters, so as to give our readers an idea of the wealth and variety of their works? We choose a few at random. And first, the medal of Aldus Manutius (Pl. XVI., 7), which still preserves the austere style of the Quattrocento, although it can only have been produced after 1495, as is shown by the reverse with its beautiful emblem, copied from a denarius of the Emperor Titus, which Aldus adopted that year. We have also the somewhat weak portrait of Agostino Barbarigo (1486-1501), in which we should not recognise the energy of the Doge who seized Cyprus and headed the league against Charles VIII. of France (Pl. XVII., 3). Far otherwise does the energetic likeness of Pietro Grimani, Knight of St. John, brother of the Cardinal Domenico, appeal to us; all that we know of him is that, as orator of the Republic, he acted successfully in Hungary against the common hereditary enemy of the two powers—the Turks (Pl. XVI., 8). The characteristic medal of Leonardo Zantani (Pl. XVII., 1), an entirely unknown personality, belongs to a series of five pieces, all alike excellent, which on account of their date



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GAMBELLO, ALESS. VITTORIA ANONYMOUS VENETIANS





## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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have been designated as works of the "Master of 1523." The two graceful, most tenderly handled busts of Caterina Sandella, a mistress of Pietro Aretino, and of their daughter Adria (made before 1548, when she was married), bring us near to Alessandro Vittoria, with whose medals they show the greatest affinity (Pl. XVII., 2). The medal was, as Aretino himself tells us, cast in memory of the mother, who had died young; hence the idealised arrangement of the hair, and the Greek profile, while the likeness of the daughter on the reverse with the wonderful wealth of hair, dressed in a so-called corn-plait at the top of the head and disposed in magnificent braids behind, appears entirely true to life. The medal, cast about 1560-1570, of Antonio Bossi (Pl. XVII. 4), in the effective figure of Fama on the reverse, conceived somewhat in the style of Tintoretto, and the accompanying legend, "Nunquam Moriar," rebukes the assurance of the sitter's grievous falsehood, for not the smallest information concerning his person or actions has come down to us. Of the independence and vigour with which the art of the medallist held its own—therein entirely resembling the second bloom of Venetian painting—amid the mannerism that had



## Italian Medals

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invaded the art of the rest of Italy, we have a gratifying proof in the medal of Marino Grimani, of the year 1595, with its dignified portrait and its splendid stylistic treatment of the Lion of S. Mark on the reverse (Pl. XVII., 7).

The device "*Boonia docet*" retains its significance even as regards the relation of the ancient and famous seat of learning to the art of the medallist. Nowhere else did this art minister so predominantly to the glory of the lights of learning. Some members of the family of the ruling tyrant, one or another prince of the Church, papal legate or condottiere also succeeded in gaining its attention. Amid such favourable conditions of existence, it is difficult to explain why the local art did not develop until late. Domenico Berardi, with his single medal of Malvezzi of the year 1477, forms an exception. For a long space of time the celebrities of Bologna were obliged to turn to the medallists of neighbouring Ferrara to obtain the fulfilment of their wishes. And from Ferrara came the master, who in the course of two decades of constant activity gained once for all for his art an extension and importance that might compete with that which it enjoyed at the Court of the Este.

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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Sperandio is the most productive of the Quattrocento medallists; we possess forty-five pieces signed by him, which bring before us a motley series of the celebrities of his time: scholars and poets, physicians and astrologers, military heroes and diplomatists, professors and senators, monks, bishops and cardinals, princes and tyrants. In the circles of the dilettanti his name is—so to speak—a collective designation: and the esteem in which his works are held has been beyond all question ever since the Weimar connoisseurs proclaimed their enthusiastic admiration, extolling far above the works of Pisano "his artistic skill in proportion and form as well as in the pictorial taste shown in the composition of the reverses." The more intimate knowledge of the art of the Quattrocento and the more acutely critical eye, with which we now regard it, do not indeed justify Goethe's verdict. Though some of his portraits are unusually life-like, and, in the rarely found good casts, are wrought with great artistic skill, still it would appear in general that too numerous commissions had betrayed him into hasty work and led to the mechanical exploitation of his talent. It can scarcely, therefore, be a matter for surprise if the greater number of his portraits display the same character, and



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that we fail to perceive any advance in the artistic development of their creator. Still less do the reverses approach those of Pisano. Instead of the magnificent designs inspired with life and monumental grandeur, Sperandio gives us almost invariably abstruse or coarse allegories veiled in a pseudo-antique style; only in the rarest cases do we meet with realistic scenes taken from military life, such as (among others) in the Correggio, Bentivoglio, and Grati medals. See, too, with what lack of understanding and what clumsiness he combines Pisano's medals of Novello Malatesta and Gianfrancesco Gonzaga to produce the Grati medal (Pl. XVIII., 3); and in the Bentivoglio medal with what effrontery he reproduces in the contrary sense Pisano's medal of Lodovico Gonzaga! And if, not without reason, we throw the responsibility for the choice of his allegories on the taste of the time, more especially of the scholars, poets, and professors depicted, still the execution, for which the artist is alone responsible, is almost equally unpleasant, the drawing almost invariably devoid of spirit and delicacy, the modelling superficial (except where corrected by chasing, which is, however, usually dispensed with), the relief strong and rough, without finer transitions



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ANONYMOUS VENETIANS, SPERANDIO





## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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and, therefore, ineffective. Hence, on closer examination we restore to the earlier master his overwhelming right of priority and assign Sperandio a place in the series of medallists of the fifteenth century, not only after Pisano, but also after lesser masters, such as Pasti, Constantius, and Marescotti.

The circumstances of Sperandio's life are only fragmentarily known. Born at Mantua about 1425, he removed in 1437 with his father the goldsmith Bartolomeo—a member of the Roman family of the Savelli—to Ferrara, where he fell under the influence of Pisano, Pasti, and Marescotti. About 1450 he appears at Mantua, after 1460 at Milan, where he produced his first medal of the Duke Francesco Sforza (Pl. XVII., 5), a somewhat dry, spiritless work, the reverse of which is a direct copy of the Malatesta temple on one of Pasti's medals. From 1463 to 1477 he dwelt in Ferrara, employed by the Este more as a sculptor than a medallist; only three of the twenty medals which he produced there being dedicated to the reigning family. Among the rest we may mention as conspicuous that of Jacopo Trotti (Pl. XVII., 8), minister and envoy of Ercole I. (the reverse offers an appalling example of Sperandio's tasteless allegories); further, that of the ducal orator Antonio



## Italian Medals

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Sarzanella (Pl. XIX., 1), with a reverse which is but little better (Prudence seated on a throne composed of two dogs); and especially that of Niccolò da Correggio (1450-1508) (Pl. XVIII., 1). The last was the son-in-law of Bartolomeo Colleoni, a no less celebrated military hero; he was, moreover, one of the earliest dramatic poets of Italy, and so accomplished a courtier that the highly cultured Marchioness Isabella Gonzaga was able to describe him as "*più atilato et de rime et cortesie erudito cavagliere et barone che si ritrovasse in Italia.*" Here for once the reverse shows a pleasing realism, and is a skilful circular composition; and its interpretation as an illustration of the biblical inscription round it (Ps. lxxxv. 13) is unconstrained.

After a passing sojourn at Faenza we find Sperandio in 1478 at Bologna, which he did not leave again until 1495. Here he produced important works of sculpture (the Tomb of Alexander V., busts of Bentivoglio, Sanuti, Barbazza, decorations of the Church of La Santa); and the fact that from 1486-1488 he was obliged to depend for support on the public alms-box seems the more inexplicable. One of the earliest of the fifteen medals which he produced in Bologna (before



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SPERANDIO





## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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1482) is that of Federigo Montefeltre, Duke of Urbino (Pl. XVII., 6), the model of an enlightened ruler, inspired with the noblest and highest ideals. This medal it was which chiefly betrayed Goethe into his exaggerated panegyric on the master. It is, indeed, one of Sperandio's greatest achievements; unfortunately the equestrian figure on the reverse is badly proportioned and unsuccessfully adapted to the circular field. The portrait of the world-renowned Professor of Law, Andrea Barbazza (died 1480), is worthy of the master, although in the hand, half amputated by the truncation of the bust and hanging in the armhole of the gown, we notice the naturalistic degeneration of composition in relief (Pl. XVIII., 2). Irreproachable, however, is the portrait of the powerful adherent of the Bentivoglio, Count Carlo Grati (Pl. XVIII., 3); true, with the limitations already specified as regards the design of the reverse.

Sperandio returned to his native Mantua an aged man in 1495, and on the occasion of the festival for the victory over Charles VIII. at Fornovo (July 6, 1495), in spite of his seventy years, produced three of his best medals, representing the leaders of the alliance against France: the Doge Agostino



## Italian Medals

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Barbarigo, the Marquis Gianfrancesco Gonzaga, and Giovanni Bentivoglio II. (Pl. XVIII., 4), the last of whom stayed in Mantua on account of the victory. We also give here (Pl. XIX., 2) the medal of Bentivoglio's wife, the equally beautiful and intriguing Ginevra Sforza, daughter of the lord of Pesaro, the pleasing work of an anonymous artist of a somewhat earlier date (about 1480). Little at this time did the princess dream of the exile into which she and her husband would be forced to retire (in 1506), and for which her own cruel ambition and ungovernable pride had not least prepared the way.

The place left vacant by Sperandio's departure was at once worthily filled by a son of Bologna, Francesco Raibolini, called *il Francia* (1450-1517), universally known as goldsmith and painter. Already in his three-and-thirtieth year, he stood at the head of the Guild of Goldsmiths, and between 1494 and 1506 engraved the dies for the coins of Bentivoglio, and, after the banishment of the latter, for Pope Julius II., as well as for the Este and the Sforza of Pesaro, and many others, while, according to Vasari's testimony, he also modelled several medals. Although not signed, the four pieces of the Bolognese scholars Musotti and Ruggieri, of Cardinal Alidosi and of

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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Bernardo Rossi, Bishop of Treviso, are attributed to his hand. Since the last named (Pl. XIX., 3), however, was not produced until after 1519, it must be the work of one of his pupils. In this year Rossi came as legate to Bologna, and by his energetic interference put an end to the anarchy that had prevailed for years at Ravenna. To this the inscription on the reverse undoubtedly refers. The scene here, however, in spite of its unmistakably close correspondence to Francia's manner, betrays the more vigorous conception and the heavier hand of a disciple. This is rendered evident by the comparison with the reverse of the medal of Francesco Alidosi, the insolent favourite of Julius II., who was slain at Ravenna on the public road in 1511 by Julius's nephew, Francesco della Rovere, afterwards Duke of Urbino (Pl. XIX., 4). The composition of the reverse shows the refined grace, the treatment of the portrait, the somewhat vague softness that characterise Francia as painter; the technical execution is of consummate perfection, as was to be expected from the excellent goldsmith. With these pieces we would place the coronation medal of Alexander VI. of the year 1492, which Friedländer has accepted as a work of Caradosso (Pl. XIX., 5). That attri-



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bution is, however, contradicted not only by the circumstance that the Milanese artist was not yet living in Rome at this period, and that the Pope would have been more likely to apply to his own subject, the already trusted Francia, but above all by the fact that in style, more especially in its soft, full modelling, our medal is nearer to the Bolognese master. The thick-set figures in baggy garments on the reverse have much more of the character of Francia than of the slender, elegant figures of Caradosso. In his capacity of die-engraver, beside the above-mentioned coins, Francia has also left us a number of smaller testoni (see pp. 10 and 58), the finest of which displays the head of Giovanni Bentivoglio II., dated 1494 (Pl. XIX., 6).

For the creators of the fairly numerous medals, which, about the same and at a somewhat later date, appeared in Bologna and the neighbourhood, we shall have to search among the more than two hundred pupils, who, according to Francia's own records, received their education in his studio; the greater number of them were probably goldsmiths and medallists. We are not able to assign names to these works; not until later does a medallist appear again as a tangible

## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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personality in Bologna, and he has no immediate connection with Francia. Giovanni Zacchi, son of the sculptor Zaccaria of Volterra, was born at Bologna about 1515, and there spent the greater part of his life in his father's profession, chiefly in the employment of the Farnese. His medals belong both to the beginning and to the end of his artistic career. Between the years 1536 and 1538 he produced a group of seven, perhaps eight, partly signed pieces. Among these the best (probably due to a casual sojourn at Venice) is a medal, cast in 1536, of Andrea Gritti (1454-1538) at the age of eighty-two, the honoured conqueror of the imperial and French armies, and one of the few doges who did not spring from the Venetian Patriciate (Pl. XIX., 7). The portrait, which is full of character and very carefully chased, is worthy to be classed, although its style is softer, with the medallic portraits of the Quattrocento. In the somewhat defiant Goddess of Fortune on the reverse are, however, already foreshadowed the generalised forms and the artificial grace of the later Bolognese Academy. Zacchi also executed several medals of Paul III. in Rome; among the many of this Pope the two dated 1536 and 1537 are probably due to his hand. We hear, again, in 1555, of several



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medals of noble Roman ladies, on which he was then engaged for Cardinal Farnese, nephew of the Pope, although we are unable to specify any of these pieces, and here all information about the master ceases. With Zacchi ends the series of Bolognese medallists who in their works followed the good old traditions of the Quattrocento; the struck medals of the later masters belong entirely to the manner of the Cinquecento.

We may here most appropriately place some masters belonging to the second half of the fifteenth century, who, although perhaps born elsewhere, worked for the most part in the Romagna and the Marches. Of these the most important is Gianfrancesco Enzola, of Parma, with his contribution of thirteen pieces, most of them signed and dated. The earliest (1456) displays the likeness in profile of Francesco Sforza, of Milan (Pl. XIX., 8), in a much more animated light than we have seen it on Sperandio's medal. The greyhound on the reverse, towards which a hand is stretching from the clouds, is one of the many personal emblems (*impres*) of the Duke. A few years later Enzola is employed in Faenza and Forlì by the Manfredi and Ordelaffi; is in Parma from 1467







## The Medallists of Venice, etc.

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until 1471; in 1472 we find him as Master of the Mint in Ferrara, and to the years 1474 and 1475 belong his four most successful medals of Costanzo Sforza, lord of Pesaro, which differ from one another only in their reverses. In the beautiful obverse (Pl. XX., 1) survive—so far as regards the conception and carefulness of the work—the best traditions of Pasti, Petricini, and the later Ferrarese masters. On the other hand, our artist is not happy in the reverses (the figure of a horseman in armour, an army crossing a bridge, a fortress surrounded by a landscape). In their heraldic treatment they betray the seal-engraver; in fact, a seal of the city of Parma engraved by him still exists.ENZOLA is also the artist to whom the two earliest struck medals (of Pietro de Rossi and his wife, 1457) can be assigned; the author of the medal of Lodovico Gonzaga, which appeared between 1433 and 1444, is unknown.

Clemens Urbinas signs his name as the artist on the medal (dated 1468) of Federigo da Montefeltre (Pl. XX., 2), the wise and high-minded ruler of Urbino, that tiny model state in the midst of the tyrannies of the Marches, which prolonged their existence from day to day by outrages and violent deeds of



## Italian Medals

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the worst description. Neither from any other work, nor from documentary evidence, has any information concerning our artist been preserved; his somewhat dry work gives, not perhaps artistically the most important, but apparently the most faithful portrait of the prince.

The same ruler also appears on a medal of only half the size made twenty years earlier by a master Paulus de Ragusio (Ragusa) (Pl. XX., 4). Not only the youthful aspect of the prince (born in 1422), but also the inscription on the reverse, which designates him as the commander of the Neapolitan army, a dignity that was only granted to Federigo in 1450, fixes its date, roughly speaking, in this year. It cannot therefore belong to 1474, as Friedländer has it, explaining the ermine on the reverse as symbolical of the Order of the Ermine of Aragon with which Federigo was invested in 1474, whereas, in fact, it merely represents one of the many imprese of the Duke.<sup>1</sup> Entirely corresponding in size, style and inscription

<sup>1</sup> This date of 1450 is supported by the circumstance that our medal does not represent the Duke—as all subsequent medals do—with the bridge of his nose broken. The tournament in which he suffered this injury, as well as the loss of his right eye, took place at the fête given at Urbino in 1450 to celebrate the elevation of Francesco Sforza to the Dukedom of Milan (see Dennistoun, *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino*, London, 1851, vol. i. p. 95).



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ENZOLA, CLEMENS URBINAS, PAOLO DA RAGUSA, AVERULINO

Fine p. 98





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to the former, and therefore belonging to the same period, is the second signed medal of our artist, representing Alfonso, King of Naples (Pl. XX., 3). It is not therefore a restoration, as Friedländer in accordance with the opinion expressed above was forced to assume, but taken from life. Like it, therefore, the medal of Montefeltre must have been produced at Naples. Although not works of distinguished merit, both are nevertheless pleasing achievements of a very able artist, and at all events show greater animation than the more pretentious piece of Clement of Urbino.





IV

THE FLORENTINE MEDALS





#### IV

### THE FLORENTINE MEDALS



IN none of the many centres of art in Italy, Venice herself not excepted, did the medal develop to such a height as in Florence. The work of one single master (the most productive of all, it is true), Pastorino de' Pastorini, with his nearly two hundred pieces, exceeds by a considerable number the entire series of both signed and anonymous medals of Venice. If in Northern Italy the conditions were, as we have seen, more advantageous than elsewhere to the rise of the new branch of art, yet in the second half of the Quattrocento the banks of the Arno had produced a culture so rich and luxuriant in every department of human activity, that no soil more favourable for its extension could have been desired. The Florentine was not satisfied with the glorification of the ruler and his family, or perhaps of some of his favourites and chosen associates. The statesman



## Italian Medals

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as well as the wealthy merchant, the scholar like the poet and the artist, the ascetic monk as well as the beautiful woman, the youth of noble family while still almost a boy, as well as the lovely maiden, the heroic soldier, and even the adventurer, claimed and received their share of posthumous fame in the medal as in other forms.

Unfortunately the masters in Florence, more commonly even than other medallists in general, left their works unsigned. The information also, collected by the well-known historiographer of the Florentine artists, concerning their productions is scanty, and, moreover, little to be depended on. Thus, apart from the signed pieces, no other means of ascertaining the authors of the other medals remains than partly to give a more liberal play to conjecture, partly to arrange particular groups according to certain accidental superficialities, which allow us to conclude that such and such works may be by the same master. Yet, after all, a long list remains to be placed under the head of anonymous works.

All Florentine medals, however, be their creators known or not, display a common character, such as is peculiar to the productions of Florence in every province of art ; it lies in the

## Florentine Medals

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strong and profound grasp of nature and in the life-like rendering of it in the portrait; in the monumental accentuation of the essential and the subordination of all details. The portrait invariably remains the chief feature; much less care is devoted to the reverses. These display for the most part single figures of unpretentious design and coarse execution, usually without any special connection with the person depicted, on which account they are frequently repeated. The relief is high, the modelling executed only on broad lines, the chasing generally omitted. Some isolated pieces form exceptions both in character and treatment. "We see that the artists are intelligent and experienced, working easily and rapidly, as to order. In keeping with this is the fact that numerous large medallions were exactly reproduced on a small scale" (Friedländer).

The earliest of the Florentine medals is probably that on which the architect and sculptor Antonio Averulino, called Filarete (*circa* 1400-1460), has given us his own portrait (Pl. XX., 5). That he is its creator is evident from the entirely similar stylistic conception and execution of the portrait on the bronze door of St. Peter's in Rome, his authenticated work



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(finished in 1445). The representation and inscription on the reverse, however, in which he extols the kindness shown him by his prince, allow us to fix the date of its appearance. From the end of 1451 until 1454 Averulino was in the service of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, and was occupied in building the fortress and cathedral there; from 1457 until 1463 he was engaged in the construction of the hospital, and repeatedly received marks of distinction from the Duke. Our medal must therefore have been produced in the early fifties. Neither in conception nor in composition is it a great work of art, more especially when we consider that its creator must have beheld the grand examples of Vittore Pisano in Milan. Nevertheless, in the half-innocent, half-wily expression of the profile, the character of the strange creature that Filarete remained all his life is excellently depicted. Among other things he engraved, as it were his signature, on the doors of St. Peter's the words, "My assistants may boast of the work—I am glad that it is done."

Artistically much more important is the figure who next meets us, Andrea Guazzalotti (1435-1495). Belonging to one of the most respected families of Prato and educated for a

## Florentine Medals

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clerical career, he lived as scribe at the papal Curia until 1467, and then retired to a canonry belonging to the cathedral of his native city. He carried his practice of the art of the medallist far beyond the achievement of a mere amateur; indeed in Prato he had a foundry where he also cast the works of other medallists, and executed other works in bronze. This is attested by the considerable number of medals from his hand which we possess—ten undoubted (of which four are signed) and four which are attributed to him, though not with entire certainty. The earliest is that of Nicholas V., which, according to the inscription, was not cast until after the death of the Pope (March 24th, 1455). It is at the same time the oldest not restored papal medal—characteristic, but very coarse, especially in the reverse. Now, however, it is only extant in a single bronze example in addition to some lead casts in the Library of S. Mark's in Venice.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the medals of Nicholas's two immediate successors, Calixtus III. and Pius II., were made during their lifetime; the latter is dated 1460, and is certified as the work of

<sup>1</sup> [The British Museum possesses a bronze specimen (Kenry, *Guide to Italian Medals*, p. 79, No. 306).—G. F. H.]



## Italian Medals

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Guazzalotti by some verses of one of the Court poets of the far-travelled humanist Pope (Pl. XXI., 1). Here the head is already much more intelligently conceived; the pelican on the reverse, however, is directly copied from a medal of Pisano's. In artistic value the medal of Pius is surpassed by that made two decades later of his second successor, Pope Sixtus IV. (Pl. XXI., 2). Of Paul II., his immediate successor, none seems to have been cast by our artist. And indeed both in the portrait, which is not only modelled in a masterly way like that of Pius, but is also for once chased throughout with the greatest care, and especially in the composition of the reverse, the medal of Sixtus is probably the greatest success that our good Canon ever achieved; the nude figure of Constantia (Steadfastness), leaning on a column (the symbol of strength), gazes at the prisoners, weapons and galleys lying at her feet. These attributes, as also the date 1481, show us that the medal was cast to commemorate the expulsion of the Turks from Otranto on August 16th of that year. The same occasion gave rise to three other medals—differing only in the reverses—of the leader of the united Neapolitan and papal armies, Alfonso of Calabria, son of

## Florentine Medals

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Ferdinand I., King of Naples (Pl. XXI., 3). If, on the obverse, our artist has here succeeded in the difficult task of depicting a three-quarters bust (we may compare his work with Sperandio's Sforza medal, Pl. XVII., 5), his achievement on the reverse, illustrating the entry of the Duke into the reconquered city, is more or less of a failure. For the pictorial, overcrowded composition runs directly counter to the laws of relief, more especially in their application to the medal.

In the fourth medal, cast to commemorate the victory of Alfonso over the Florentines at Poggio Imperiale in 1479, which shows his likeness in profile, we are unable—in spite of the authority of Armand, Friedländer, and Heiss—to perceive the hand of Guazzalotti (Pl. XXI., 4). Compare with the style of the master the far weaker, almost indistinct, modelling, the vague, free treatment of the hair, the entirely characteristic composition and execution of the relief on the reverse (the sacrifice of a bull in the presence of a nude figure and another in armour); nay, take into consideration even the form of the letters in the inscription, so different from his. We are much more inclined to recognise in the piece a work of Bertoldo di



## Italian Medals

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Giovanni (*circa* 1420-1491), the well-known pupil of Donatello, the intimate friend of the Medici, the keeper of their museum of antiquities in the Garden of San Marco, and as such the earliest teacher of Michael Angelo. Several bronze statues by the master are preserved in Florence, Modena, Vienna, and Berlin. Strangely enough, he invariably left the casting of his works to others, more particularly to his pupil—to be mentioned later—Adriano Fiorentino. A letter of Guazzalotti to Lorenzo de' Medici, of the year 1478, accompanying four medals which he had cast for Bertoldo, also bears witness to this fact. We are only acquainted with one medal signed by our artist—that of Mohammed II., not taken from life, but executed from the portrait modelled by Gentile Bellini in 1480, and therefore a striking likeness (Pl. XXI., 5). The reverse, depicting the Sultan with the provinces he had subjugated in the form of three nude female figures in chains on a triumphal car, and conceived entirely in the taste of the antique, allows us, in virtue of the closest similarity of invention, style, modelling, and treatment of the relief, to ascribe to Bertoldo with complete certainty two other reverses: that of the medallion of Letizia Sanuto with the triumph of Pudicitia, and one which



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GUZZALOTTI, BERTOLDO





## Florentine Medals

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exists only as a plaque—the obverse belonging to it not having been preserved—likewise a triumphal procession representing rejected Love.

These few pieces are by no means sufficient to justify the judgment pronounced by one of his contemporaries, that Bertoldo was "di medaglie ottimo fabbricatore, il quale sempre col magnifico Lorenzo (Medici) faceva cose degne." Praise such as this presupposes a much greater productiveness as medallist, which, especially in the objective interest of his works, must necessarily have appealed to wider circles. And, as a matter of fact, the quick eye, wide knowledge, and penetrating perception of W. Bode have lately discovered the solution of the problem. On entirely convincing grounds, based on one side on formal and stylistic resemblances, on the other on the combination and interpretation of traditional and documentary data (such as the letter of Guazzalotti mentioned above),<sup>1</sup> Bode

<sup>1</sup> I am prevented by want of space from entering more fully into the question. For further particulars I refer my readers to Bode's most comprehensive study of *Bertoldo di Giovanni und seine Renaissancewerke* in the *Jahrbuch des K. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, 1895, parts III. and IV., lately printed in an extended form in his *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance* (Berlin, 1902, pp. 296 ff.). To my great satisfaction, I discover in reading the above-quoted work, which only came into my hands after my manuscript was written, that Bode fully agrees with me in ascribing the medal of Alfonso of Calabria to Bertoldo (*loc. cit.*, p. 305).



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has demonstrated that not Antonio Pollaiuolo—as, on the strength of Vasari's superficial statements, has hitherto been assumed—but Bertoldo was the creator of the well-known medals commemorating the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, to which Giuliano Medici fell a victim. And not of these alone, but of the medal of Filippo de' Medici, Archbishop of Pisa (who died 1478); of a reverse which is only known to us in its hybrid association with the portrait of Antonio Graziadei,<sup>1</sup> the imperial orator at the Papal Court; and lastly, perhaps, of a medal of Frederick III., of the year 1469, the reverse of which depicts the Emperor with his retinue of horsemen crossing the Bridge of S. Angelo. Both sides of the Pazzi medal (Pl. XXII., 1) give the octagonal choir of the Cathedral of Florence with the priests celebrating High Mass, and in front the attack of the conspirators on Lorenzo and Giuliano Medici respectively, while above are the busts of the two brothers. In that of Giuliano the likeness in conception and bearing to the portrait painted by Botticelli in the Berlin Gallery is obvious, even

<sup>1</sup> That the obverse is not due to Bertoldo is evident from the facts that Graziadei was only invested with the dignity 1481-1483—therefore at a time when our master was living in advanced years at Florence—and that no information concerning any sojourn of his in Rome has come down to us.

## Florentine Medals

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although the intellectual animation of the painting is not attained. From the reproduction the reader may perceive how near in style and treatment of relief the medal stands to the authenticated reverses of Bertoldo. Only in the Pazzi medal everything is represented on a miniature scale. We may, however, observe the great similarity in form and attitude of the figures in the foreground to those on the reverse of the Alfonso medal which we have attributed above to Bertoldo. Similar, too, is its relation to the Last Judgment on the reverse of the medallion of Filippo Medici, as also to the triumphal procession of Mercury and the Nine Muses on the Graziadei medal. Finally, Bode lays stress, and with justice, on the fact that the similarity of form, distribution, and arrangement of the inscriptions in all these pieces (and, we may add, in the fourth medal of Alfonso also), on the one hand, and on the other on the medal of Mohammed, as well as some isolated and uncommon forms of the letters which we meet with in both, point to the same master as the creator of the entire series.

Henceforward we are no longer to regard Antonio Pollaiuolo as the author of the above two medals hitherto



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assigned to him. And as we have also decisively to deprive him of a third, ascribed to him by the French authorities—with, it is true, a certain reserve—we must strike out his name altogether from the list of Florentine medallists. This is the medal of Innocent VIII. with the figures of three virtues on the reverse (Pl. XXII., 2). The only and very contestable ground for ascribing it to Pollaiuolo lies in the circumstance that on opening, in 1606, the sarcophagus of this pope, cast by him, an example of the medal was found inside. But the style of the work had absolutely nothing in common with the pregnant style of the bronze sculptures of the Florentine master, and Friedländer was even inclined to ascribe them to Francia, his very antipodes in style. We cannot agree in this ascription—especially on consideration of the treatment of the reverse—but are as little in a position to ascribe the beautiful work to any other of the Florentine medallists. For that the artist must be sought for among the ranks of the Florentines seems to us at least to be firmly established.

But still more! On yet another Florentine celebrity must we carry out the like sentence of execution. Vasari speaks—

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not in the biography of the master, but elsewhere incidentally —of Michelozzo, the celebrated Director of Works at the Court of the Medici and sculptor in bronze and marble, as the author of a medal, no longer extant, of Sante Bentivoglio of the year 1445. Three pages further on (vol. viii. p. 99), however, where he enumerates the works done by the artist for Cosimo Medici, he mentions no medal of the latter among them, although had a work of the kind been forthcoming the passage would have demanded its notice. Nevertheless, on the strength of Vasari's vague statements, and in consideration of the close relations that existed between Michelozzo and Cosimo the Elder, it is believed that the medal of Cosimo, which has come down to us in four slightly different variants, is to be attributed to him. The attribution dates back to the Weimar dilettanti, who ascribed the fourth variant to Michelozzo, while for the first (which, being artistically the most important, we reproduce in Pl. XXII., 3), they actually adduce the name of Donatello. From them it would appear Armand and Heiss inherited the attribution (which they extend to all the four replicas), while Friedländer explains them as works of Niccolò Fiorentino, of whom we shall speak



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later. In any case, this view has more probability in its favour than that of the French savants. The delicate individualisation in the portrait does not correspond to the rude provincial manner of Michelozzo, nor even does the Florentia on the reverse reveal anything of the conspicuous manner in which in his statues he strove to imitate the antique ; but apart from this the latter theory is opposed by chronological considerations. Since Cosimo died on August 1st, 1464, and only received the title P(ater) P(atriciae) accorded him on the medal after his death, *i.e.* on March 16th, 1465 (Friedländer incorrectly gives March 16th, 1464), it follows that the medal cannot have been produced previous to this date. On the other hand, the accurate reproduction of it in a miniature in the title of a Codex of the Laurentiana, dedicated to Piero Medici, shows that it must have existed as early as 1469, the year of Piero's death. We know, however, that Michelozzo was absent in Milan, Ragusa, and Schio from 1462 onwards, and it appears improbable that even had they waited until the return of the master (in 1466 at the earliest) the Medici would have entrusted the commission to a man of seventy, when Florence already possessed



BERTOLDO, ANONYMOUS FLORENTINES





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a series of approved medallists (see below).<sup>1</sup> As regards the medal itself, however, we cannot better characterise its artistic value than in Goethe's words: "The work is quite extraordinarily masterly and bold; at the first glance, it is true, the portrait seems sketchy and hastily designed; on closer inspection, however, it is wonderfully ingenious, full of meaning, and complete in every part."

The circumstance that the miniature just mentioned, as well as a second work by the same author and written by the same hand, also reproduces two medals of the two sons of Cosimo the Elder, Piero and Giovanni, of which some examples are preserved (Pl. XXII., 4), gives us occasion to say a few words on the subject. The inscription, "P(atris) P(atriciae) F(ilius)," which appears on both, shows that they were cast after the death of Cosimo, and that therefore the medal of Giovanni, who died a year before his father, was not modelled from life. Both were probably produced, as also was that of Cosimo, at the instance of Piero Medici, between 1465 and 1469. On the evidence of a letter addressed in June, 1471,

<sup>1</sup> This view of ours, the grounds for which we have already stated elsewhere (see *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. xxiv. p. 313), is also shared by Bode (compare the above-quoted work, p. 295).



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to Lorenzo de' Medici by the goldsmith and medallist, Lodovico da Foligno, who worked in Ferrara from 1451 onwards, Armand and, after him, Heiss believe that it is to be ascribed to the writer. To us the letter seems to prove exactly the contrary. Although it accompanied the consignment of a medal of the Duchess Bona of Milan, and thereby, almost as a matter of course, invited him to mention the medals of Lorenzo's father and uncle, had such been already executed by Lodovico, the master therein speaks only "of the love which he had always cherished for his Magnificence the noble lord Piero de Cosimo," as also of his urgent wish to see Lorenzo (the expression can also be interpreted as "to become acquainted with," which would then show that Lodovico was not in Florence during the years 1465-1469). Unfortunately none of the artist's medals, attested by documents, of Galeazzo Maria Sforza<sup>1</sup> and his

<sup>1</sup> Or have we before us one of these works in the large cast medal (diam. 5 cm.) dated 1470, with the Sforza lion wearing a helmet on the reverse? Friedländer has reproduced it in Pl. XXXVI., among the coins and medals attributed by him to Caradosso. It is scarcely credible, however, that so important a work would have been entrusted to a youth only just eighteen (Caradosso was born at earliest in 1452, not as Friedländer has it, in 1445). Neither does it correspond in style to the struck medals accredited to Caradosso. We are only acquainted with examples of it in silver, and Lodovico says in his letter that he made

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wife Bona,<sup>1</sup> of Lionello and Sigismondo d'Este, have been preserved, and a comparison is thus denied us. But in the severe realism, which neither palliates nor minimises in the slightest degree the ugliness of the person depicted, these seem to point to the medallic art of Florence rather than to that of Ferrara, which about this time was softer in its character. Were we to claim an author for them we should name as the most probable, even before the anonymous Florentines, Niccolò Fiorentino.

With this master, probably called Niccolò di Forzore Spinelli (1430-1514), we are again on sure ground. He was sprung from an old family of goldsmiths—his father and grandfather had practised the art, while his great-uncle, Spinello Aretino, was the well-known Giottesque painter. The earliest of his five signed and dated medals, that of Silv. Duziari, Bishop of Chioggia (extant in a single cast at Vienna), was<sup>2</sup> produced in 1485. Where he worked before his five-and-fiftieth year we do not know, unless he was

it in silver. The date, which is about a year or two late, may be an error on the part of the artist, or—what is more probable—he may have made the wax model, which he mentions in his letter, a year earlier in Milan and dated the medal from it.



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identical with that Nicolas de Spinel who in 1468 was occupied as seal-engraver at the Court of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and whose portrait we possess in a precious panel by the hand of Memling. Now a medal (a unique example in the Berlin Cabinet, Pl. XXIII., 2) of Charles's natural brother, the so-called "great Bastard of Burgundy," exists, which from the age of the sitter must belong to this period, and in conception and workmanship is not unworthy to be classed with the authentic works of our artist. Among these, next to the medal of the sixteen years old Alfonso d'Este of the year 1492, the probably but little earlier medal of Lorenzo Medici (1448-1492) claims our especial interest in virtue of the personage depicted (Pl. XXIII., 1). It gives the compressed, ugly features of the great statesman and patron of art, a heritage of his family, with a fidelity that borders on brutality. The reverse shows Florentia personified with the lily in her hand under an olive tree, the symbol of peace; apart from the fact that only defective casts exist, it excels neither in composition nor in workmanship. The artist seems to have been perfectly aware of his deficiency in the power of rendering of form, as he always readily employed for the



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NICCOLÒ FIORENTINO, TANAGLI (?)





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reverses of his medals the devices on the ancient coins and gems, the originals of which were in possession of the Medici—a striking proof of the immediate influence which their collections exercised on the development of Renaissance art.

A second medal (Pl. XXIII., 3) has preserved to us the portrait of Lorenzo as a youth. Added to where possible greater ugliness, his features have something unbridled about them; the head is covered with a fantastic helmet. We know that in a tournament in 1469, given in honour of Lucrezia Donati, Lorenzo won a silver helmet surmounted by the figure of Mars as the prize of victory. Notwithstanding the fact that, owing to artistic reasons, the figure of Mars is omitted, Armand's supposition that it was cast to commemorate the victory has much in its favour. It is strange, however, that its creator allowed the opportunity to escape him of specially indicating its connection with the tournament, instead of leaving the reverse without design. According to an attractive hypothesis of the writer mentioned above, if the pincers (*tanaglia*) in the lower section of our medal refer to the name of the medallist, he is to be looked for



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among the ancestors of the Tanagli, a goldsmith's family which still exists in Florence.

In addition to the five signed medals, research of the present day ascribes yet other twenty medals to our Niccolò; nothing but similarity of style, however, forms the more or less sure foundation for this attribution. Among these medals two unique pieces in the Berlin Cabinet, representing Giuliano and Giovanni, the brother and son of Lorenzo de' Medici, chiefly arrest our attention. A comparison of the obverse of the first medal (Pl. XXIV., 1) with the two portraits of Giuliano, ascribed to Botticelli, in the galleries of Berlin and Bergamo, shows that, although Niccolò held much more closely to the life, he nevertheless understood the art of endowing his works with a more monumental quality. The Nemesis of the reverse, holding as attributes in her hands the bowl and bridle, is in complete harmony as regards both conception and workmanship with the Florentia of the Lorenzo medal, and is equally unsatisfactory. The avenging goddess evidently points to the violent end of Giuliano, and thus fixes the date of the production of the work soon after 1478. The inscription

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of the second medal (Pl. XXIV., 2) calls Giovanni cardinal; it was, therefore, not produced until after 1492, since the news of his appointment made two years before was only published in this year. But as he no longer retains a youthful aspect, and the signs of obesity already show themselves in the bloated face, the medal must be placed shortly before 1513 (the year of his election to the Papacy), and is therefore to be classed among Niccolò's latest works. In consideration of the by no means careful execution of the nevertheless characteristic portrait, it has been denied that it is a work of Niccolò's at all, and attributed instead to one of his successors, the so-called "Hope" medallist. In our opinion this is a mistake. For we find the figure on the reverse, symbolical of Faith, similarly represented on Niccolò's medals of Niccolò Puccini and Bernardo Salviati—with the sole difference that in the latter as Charity instead of a cup she holds a cornucopiae, out of which rise the flames of Love; and, moreover, it is exactly repeated on his medals of Bernardo Banducci and Cardinal Roverella (unless the latter be a later restoration). Further, all these figures possess much more of the robust, almost rough, character of Niccolò's



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style than do those of the "Hope" medallist, which is weaker in expression and somewhat mannered in the disposal of the drapery.

Out of the long series of Florentine celebrities whom our master has immortalised, we mention as two of the most successful the medals of Lorenzo Tornabuoni (Pl. XXIV., 5) and his young wife Giovanna Albizzi (Pl. XXIV., 3). These two it was who, shortly after their marriage in 1486, were glorified by Botticelli in the frescoes at the Villa Lemmi, near Florence (now in the Louvre). Judging from the youthful aspect of the married pair, their medals must have been produced about the same period. Our interest is still further roused by the tragic fate of both. Giovanna died after having given birth to her third child, and when barely thirty-one years old Lorenzo, with four of his associates, was beheaded in 1497 as a participator in the conspiracy for the restoration of the banished Medici to Florence. The reverse of his medal displays a barocco winged Mercury; that of Giovanna—also in its modelling one of Niccolò's most beautiful creations—a copy of the group of the Three Graces, which now stands in the Library of the Cathedral of Siena,



NICCOLÒ FIORENTINO





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and was probably excavated in the last quarter of the fifteenth century in Rome. The restorations on the medal of the arms—which are missing in the marble statue—correspond, curiously enough, even to the flowers in the hands of the goddess, with an ancient painting from Herculaneum; it follows that Niccolò must here have employed as model a cameo in the Medicean collection, which had served the same purpose in the fresco of fifteen hundred years earlier. The same reverse is also borne by the medal of Pico della Mirandola, one of the most consummate of our artist's works (Plate XXIV., 4). Who does not recognise in this work the glorious ideal figure of this "Knight of the Intellect," beside whom we, on this side the Alps, *mutatis mutandis*, can only perhaps place Ulrich von Hutten? Who has not felt himself uplifted by Pico's far-seeing and entirely unprejudiced "Discourse on the Dignity of Mankind," which Jacob Burckhardt justly calls one of the noblest legacies of this epoch of culture? Our medal was probably cast about 1490 (Pico died in 1494 at the age of thirty-one), and is apparently contemporary with that of Angelo Poliziano (1454-1494), the intimate friend of Lorenzo Medici and the tutor of his sons (Pl. XXV., 1).



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Equally unprepossessing in his ugly exterior and conspicuous whether as an acute interpreter of the classics, or as poet in the Greek, Latin, or Italian language, among the whole band of versifiers who sunned themselves in the splendour of the Medici, Poliziano was the only one who, besides Lorenzo himself, with justice and honour bore the name of Poet.

We close the selection of our reproductions with the splendid medal of Giovanni Tornabuoni (Pl. XXV., 2), the father of Lorenzo and uncle of the Magnifico, to whose love of art we also owe Ghirlandajo's frescoes in the choir of S. Maria Novella and Verrocchio's reliefs on the tomb of his wife (now in the Museo Nazionale in Florence). A smaller replica of our medal bears the date 1492. It embodies in the most admirable way the manner of its master, not only in the likeness, which is as characteristic as it is monumentally conceived, but in the reverse, with its vigorous drawing and high relief, but sketchy, almost rude, modelling.

Apart from his own productions, Niccolò Fiorentino also exercised an important influence on the medallic art of the later Quattrocento in Florence. This is so clearly displayed in a great number of medals of this school, that in former days (and



NICCOLO FIORENTINO. "HOPE" MEDALLIST





## Florentine Medals

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lately again by Bode) many have been actually ascribed to the master. Nevertheless, they differ from Niccolò's works in general in the finer, more detailed modelling, as well as in the freer conception and composition of the reverses, where the designs are not so directly derived from the model of antique gems.<sup>1</sup>

Since a thick veil of anonymity hides their creators from our eyes, the French specialists, with the aim of differentiating them where possible, have seized on the expedient of calling them after the designs which as a rule are repeated on the reverses of the pieces. Thus fifteen to twenty medals are claimed for the "Hope" Medallist already mentioned above (Heiss and Armand differ somewhat from one another in their attributions), and from this series we reproduce as the most pleasing that of Nonnina Strozzi, wife of the otherwise unknown Bernardo Barbigia (cast in 1489, Pl. XXV., 3). A comparison with Niccolò's medals of Giovanna Albizzi and Giovanni Tornabuoni brings before us, better than words can

<sup>1</sup> We leave out of present consideration the pieces of two medallists of the same name, of whom one, about the year 1494, practised his art at the Court of Charles VIII. of France, while the other worked at Lyons from 1494-1499. The formerly accepted opinion, which identified them with Niccolò di Forzore Spinelli, has lately been proved to be erroneous.



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do, the difference between the two masters, which we have already attempted to describe. Quite excellent, however, is the expression of the personality in the portrait of Alessandro Pagagnotti (Pl. XXVI., 2), a Florentine not otherwise known to us: here the particularisation in the modelling of the features is carried far beyond the general wont of the Florentine medallists.

Not so near to Niccolò Fiorentino stands the "Fortune" Medallist, each of whose eight medals displays on the reverse the nude figure of the Goddess of Fortune, an inflated sail in her hands, and borne by a dolphin through the waves. According to the noteworthy conjecture of G. Milanesi, the letters "L. C. M." in the inscription round the reverse of the medal of Lorenzo Ciglia Mocchi (Pl. XXVI., 1) indicate that he was the artist of this and also of the seven remaining pieces. Unfortunately nothing further is known concerning him. His medals, however, betray a more mechanical capacity, not only by the lack of inspiration in the portrait, but also by the style of the figure on the reverse, which reminds us of an engraving.

A much more important artistic personality is revealed by the six medals which bear the name of the "Eagle" Medallist. Foremost among these is that of Filippo Strozzi (1426-1491),



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"HOPE," "FORTUNE" AND "EAGLE" MEDALLISTS





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the builder of the world-famous Palace in Florence (Pl. XXVI., 4). Since on this medal he has the aspect of a man of sixty, it follows that it cannot have been produced long before his death. We have already spoken in the Introduction of the model for it. We forbear to decide whether the resemblance between the treatment of the portrait, "with its old-fashioned austerity, and yet so extremely life-like expression," and the busts of Filippo in Berlin and the Louvre, as well as the circumstance that several years back some copies of it were discovered in the foundation walls of the Strozzi Palace, provide sufficient grounds for ascribing it—as W. Bode has lately done—to Benedetto da Majano,<sup>1</sup> the sculptor of the busts, and the supposed architect of the palace. The purely heraldic composition of the reverse is but little in harmony with the artistic proclivities of Benedetto; and Vasari in his exhaustive biography never speaks of him as a medallist. The doubtful attribution is also contradicted by the medal, bearing precisely the same reverse (Pl. XXVI., 3), of Count Giovanni Antonio

<sup>1</sup> In a subsequent perusal of his latest book on the *Florentiner Bildhauer der Renaissance*, Berlin, 1902, we see that the author has retracted this opinion (*loc. cit.*, p. 298). True, he is equally little inclined to place works to the credit of the pseudonymous masters in question, and attributes them collectively to Niccolò. [*Jahrb. d. Pr. Kunstmusei*, 1902, part I.]



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Guidi (1459-1501), a member of the Romagnoli branch of the powerful dynasty that ruled over the Casentino for upwards of five hundred years: for it represents the Count as a man of forty, therefore at a period some years later than Majano's death.

To an artist belonging to the group of which we have just spoken—most probably the "Hope" Medallist—is to be ascribed the expressive, refined medal of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), one of the most distinguished and sympathetic figures of the learned world of the Quattrocento (Pl. XXVII., 1). The conspicuous rôle which he played as the favourite and inmate of the house of Cosimo the Elder (he superintended the education of his son Lorenzo), as translator and commentator of Plato, and as head of the Platonic Academy which stood under the protection of the Medici, is too well known for us to enlarge upon it.

For the medal of another Renaissance personage who was in her sphere scarcely less prominent, we may cite the name of an artist with some degree of probability. This is the interesting medal of Catarina Sforza-Riario (1457-1509), the wife of the violent Count Girolamo Riario, nephew of Sixtus IV. and lord of Imola and Forlì (Pl. XXVII., 2). We know that

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the Florentine goldsmith Domenico Cennini (1452-1504) was in her service, and can scarcely be mistaken if with G. Milanesi we regard him as the artist not only of the medal in question, but also of a second medal of Catarina's youthful son Ottaviano. The title of Count of Forlì and Imola bestowed on him in the inscription, as well as the widow's hood of the mother, fixes the appearance of the piece after the year 1488, when Girolamo fell under the daggers of conspirators; not much after this date, however, since Ottaviano is depicted as a boy of about ten. To this date also points the reverse with the Goddess of Victory borne over the clouds by two winged horses (it clearly reveals the influence of Niccolò Fiorentino), as well as the proud inscription, "Glory follows on Victory," which evidently refers to the successful struggle of the heroic woman with the enemies who had risen against her on her husband's death. The simple, severe arrangement gives an unwonted charm to the regular profile, and stirs the curiosity of the beholder to know more of the life of this woman. Thanks to an excellent biography which has lately appeared, he can gratify his curiosity,<sup>1</sup> and hear how Catarina, after

<sup>1</sup> P. Des. Pasolini, *Caterina Sforza*, Roma, 1893, 3 vols., and, in abbreviated form, in German by M. von Sallé-Marschallina, Bauberg, 1895. [In English by P. Syivester, 1898.—A. H.]



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romantic adventures, entered into a third marriage, and as the wife of a Medici, became the ancestress of the grand-ducal line; how Caesar Borgia deprived her of her supremacy in the Romagna, brought her in golden chains to Rome, and kept her a prisoner in S. Angelo until, at length released, she ended her changeful life within the walls of a Florentine nunnery.

We shall look with, if possible, yet greater sympathy on the medals which bring before us the portrait of the gloomy prophet and unfortunate reformer, Girolamo Savonarola. They are known in ten types, which, however, are all derived from two models. Though the fanatical opponent of the Medici only permitted art to exist merely in the service of religion, yet the self-denial of the ascetic zealot does not seem to have gone so far as to refuse the request of his friends and adherents that he would allow his person to be immortalised by its means. Eight of the types of his medals are, on Vasari's evidence, attributed to one of the two sons of Andrea della Robbia, who as Frati Ambrogio and Luca were brethren of Savonarola in the convent and his zealous adherents, and as such had the most favourable opportunities

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of making models for the casting of his medals. With slight deviations they all reproduce his well-known features with rare fidelity: his deep-set glowing eye, his bony cheeks, the strong nose and protruding lips. Most directly, perhaps, are they expressed in the large medal (Pl. XXVII., 3) of the British Museum and the Berlin Cabinet, the only one in which he holds the crucifix. The reverse displays, in an awkward composition, on a field divided by a vertical line, the avenging sword of God and the Holy Ghost hovering over the city of Florence—an allusion to the gloomy prophecies of the implacable censor of morals.

Somewhat milder is the countenance in the type derived from the second model; this model is to be found in the intaglio, preserved in the Uffizi, by Giovanni delle Corniuele (1470-1516), the Florentine gem-engraver. The medal in question so perfectly corresponds to the intaglio—which Vasari has already praised to the skies as the artist's masterpiece—that we can have no hesitation in referring it to the wax model, which the artist must have taken from life before engraving the gem; the more so because we know Giovanni also to have been a warm admirer of Savonarola, and because



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a series of signed plaques proves that he worked in bronze. If these pieces already mentioned one and all appeared during the life of Savonarola, on the other hand a large bronze-gilt portrait (diam. 10 cm.), a unique piece in W. Bode's collection (Pl. XXVII., 4), is clearly shown, by the palm and lily and the cherub's head which supports the half-length figure, to be a glorification of the prophet produced after his death. The arrangement of the habit also, disposed in careful, measured folds, and the weaker, more sentimental expression, indicate the Cinquecento. We cannot, therefore, agree in the opinion of the owner, who sees in the masterpiece the hand of Sperandio, since in him we miss above all that feeling for the purely formal, almost conventionalised, beauty that shows itself so conspicuously in the medal in question. We hold it rather to be the work of a Florentine of the time and school of Fra Bartolommeo, but at the same time a memorable "monument erected by a warm admirer of the unhappily martyred apostle, even after his condemnation and death, and as such a witness to the independence of thought at the period" (Bode).

We may here most fitly place an artist whom it has only

## Florentine Medals

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quite lately been our good fortune to prove a medallist. Hitherto the member of the Florentine family of de' Maestri, who signed himself Adriano Fiorentino and died in 1499, was only known to the history of art as the pupil of Bertoldo, who employed him in casting his sculptures, and also independently as a sculptor in bronze. Among other works, the bust signed and dated 1498 of the Elector Frederick the Wise, which at the beginning of the last century was brought from the Castle of Torgau to Dresden and is now preserved in the Albertinum, is due to him.<sup>1</sup> It led us to recognise in Adriano the author of a medal (Pl. XXVII., 5) of Degenhart Pfeffinger (1471-1519), hitherto known only in two examples, one in the Gotha Cabinet of Coins, the other in the possession of Privy-Councillor Jul. Erbstein at Dresden. Pfeffinger belonged to a distinguished family, which was invested with the hereditary dignity of Provincial Marshal in Lower Bavaria; while young he went to the Court of Frederick the Wise, with whom he stood in high favour, and in whose service he remained as his intimate adviser until his death. The medal, which bears the

<sup>1</sup> For further particulars concerning the master, see an article published by me in vol. xxiv., part 1., of the *Jahrbuch der Kgl. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*.



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Pfeffinger arms on the reverse, is neither signed nor dated. But not only does the age of the sitter (who is represented as a man of about thirty) indicate that it belongs to the same time as the bust of the Elector, but—what is more important—the stylistic comparison of the two works, above all the entirely peculiar treatment of the hair, falling in lank locks ending in curls, and, finally, also the adoption in both of the same material (yellow gun-metal, a material most uncommon in Italy), prove beyond doubt that the two works are due to the same master. Our medal, indeed, as far as conception and freedom of treatment are concerned, cannot compare with its Florentine sisters; nevertheless, it reproduces the characteristic features vividly and with evident fidelity, and is of interest as the only medal of the Quattrocento made by an Italian artist on this side of the Alps.

Discoveries in archives have further revealed Adriano's presence at the Court of Ferdinand I. at Naples in the year 1493. Among the few medals of the royal house that appeared at this time is one of the Crown Prince Ferdinand, afterwards the second king of the name, which in the treatment of the hair, the stiff poise of the head, the sharp line



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ANONYMOUS FLORENTINES, ADRIANO FIORENTINO

*For. p. 135*





## Florentine Medals

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from chin to throat, and the peculiar truncation of the bust, shows many points of resemblance to the Pfeffinger medal, even although it is blunter in the modelling. The double "V" or "W" on the edge of the hat (also repeated in the field of the reverse) caused it to be attributed to a "Medallist W." But, as the position of the mark on the hat shows, the letter more probably indicates some device of the prince, and consequently does not contradict the possibility that in our medal we may have before us a second work of this kind from Adriano's hand. In this case we must, however, credit him with two other medals. Of these one is the largest of three (diam. 83 mm.) which we possess of Gioviano Pontano, the celebrated humanist and private secretary of King Ferdinand I. For the Urania of its reverse, with the graceful little plant at her feet, undoubtedly belongs to the same hand that produced the seated figure of Abundance on the reverse of the medal already mentioned. Next comes the later of the two known medals of Cardinal Raffaello Riario (after 1483; the earlier, of 1478, is a work of the Roman medallist Lysippus); for the figure on the reverse, a Liberalitas, must belong to the artist of the figure on the medal of Prince Ferdinand. Finally, Adriano is shown



## Italian Medals

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by documentary evidence to have made the two medals of Elisabetta Montefeltre, Duchess of Urbino (Pl. XXVIII., 1), and of her sister-in-law, Emilia Pio. These were produced in the year 1495, when, after the conquest of Naples by Charles VIII., the artist's way led him first to Urbino and thence across the Alps to Germany.<sup>1</sup>

We close the series of Florentine medals of the Quattrocento by citing some pieces of wholly anonymous masters, which in virtue of the personages depicted merit our interest in the highest degree. The first (Pl. XXVIII., 3) shows the profile, brutal but full of character, and modelled by a master hand, of Francesco Lancilotti (born 1472), a painter known to us not by the productions of his brush, but only by a treatise written in verse in praise of his art. Faithless to the saying to which he gives utterance in a passage in this treatise in honour of his native city—"Virtù lascia chi lascia Fiorenza"—he spent a great part of his life in restless wanderings through Italy, Spain, and North Africa, perhaps as a mercenary, since on

<sup>1</sup> Further particulars concerning this piece, which has hitherto been included among those of anonymous masters, may be found in the article by the author already quoted. [The medal of the poet Agostino Graziani da Udine, with Urania on the reverse, may also on grounds of style be assigned to Adriano.—G. F. H.]



ADRIANO FIORENTINO, ANONYMOUS FLORENTINES





## Florentine Medals

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the reverse he has depicted himself in full armour on horse-back.

The next piece (Pl. XXVIII., 2) gives the portrait of Lorenzo de' Medici (1460-1503), called *Il Popolano*, from the circumstance that after the expulsion of his family in 1495, severing himself from them, he took the side of the populace. The collateral branch to which he belonged (that from which sprang the line of Grand-Dukes) signalised itself by its patronage of art. It was for Lorenzo's father, Pierfrancesco, that Botticelli made his drawings for Dante; for Lorenzo himself that the young Michael Angelo carved a *Giovannino*, and at Lorenzo's suggestion that he modelled the little sleeping Cupid in imitation of the antique, which in our own days has been rediscovered in the Museum of Turin. The two Medici also, on whom the chisel of the great master in his riper years bestowed immortality in the sacristy of S. Lorenzo, meet us again in two medals. That of Giuliano (1478-1516), the son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, does not allow us to guess at its authorship (Pl. XXVIII., 4); on the other hand, for that of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino (nephew of Giuliano, 1492-1519), Francesco da Sangallo, whom we shall meet with later, has,



## Italian Medals

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and not entirely without justification, been made responsible (Pl. XXVIII., 5). A comparison of both medals with the statues of Michael Angelo shows, moreover, how little concerned the sculptor was with the matter of likeness in his portraits. And even the last member of the family, before the ducal hat and dominion over Tuscany were bestowed upon it, must not be omitted from our ranks; this is Giovanni delle Bande Nere (1498-1526), the son of Catarina Sforza, and father of the Grand-Duke Cosimo I. He, the last of the condottieri of the ancient stamp, took his name from the band of horsemen clad in black armour at whose head he received his death wound, fighting against the imperial troops under Frundsberg before Mantua. The medal which we reproduce (Pl. XXIX., 1) is a restoration, not made apparently until twenty years after his death. If the portrait is dry and clumsy, the cavalry fight on the reverse is grandly conceived and full of life. It is evidently an allusion to the last heroic deed of the soldier who fell so young, and in whom perished an example of the forceful energy of the past, brave and valiant, but devoid of feeling for art or learning, and without comprehension of the requirements of the time.

## Florentine Medals

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The works just brought before us have led across the threshold of the sixteenth century; with the four last masters with whom we have still to deal we move on to the middle of the Cinquecento. Our reason for annexing them to the chapter on the Florentine medallists of the Quattrocento is based on the circumstance that in their works they held fast in part entirely, in part to an overwhelming degree to the good old traditions of the cast medal, allowing the struck medal to exist alongside merely as an exception—a relation which is completely reversed in the remaining masters of the Cinquecento. We may regard this precise point as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the two epochs.

The earliest of these four masters is Domenico di Polo, de' Vetri (1480–1547), more celebrated as an engraver of gems than as a medallist. The Uffizi still preserves the intaglio of Hercules, which he engraved as a seal for Duke Alessandro Medici. He also did the portrait of the Duke in five medals, which mainly differ only in their reverses—that is, if the sign of the planet Mars, which they bear, is rightly regarded as indicating our artist. We reproduce one of them in Plate XXIX., 3. While the obverse is distinguished by excellent



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individualisation, in the reverse, where Peace sets fire to a pile of weapons, Domenico follows in the closest manner the example of antique gems, reproducing their style not without grace, but with too great an accumulation of accessories. Exactly similar in character are eight medals of Alessandro's successor, Duke Cosimo I.

Domenico is followed by Francesco da Sangallo (1494-1576), son of Giuliano, the founder of the dynasty of artists of his name, and celebrated as architect as well as sculptor. The sculptures of Francesco show nothing of the reserved conception, of the refined feeling of those of his father, who in the tombs of the Sassetti in S. Trinita has bequeathed to us two marble medallions of the giver of the commission, which in delicacy of execution might compete with medals. In his eight authentic medals and also in two others ascribed to him, Francesco is faithful to the same downright naturalistic manner, which thinks by violently obtruding itself to impose upon the beholder. The piece reproduced in Plate XXIX., 4, with the portraits of the artist and his wife, gives a characteristic example of his strong relief and of the anything but attractive conception peculiar



ANONYMOUS FLORENTINE, DOMEN. DI POLO, FRANC. DA SANGALLO





## Florentine Medals

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to him alone among all Florentine medallists. We give the medal—which is, however, merely ascribed to him—of Leo X. in Plate XXIX., 2, because comparatively speaking it is the best of this Pope, whose portrait must not be omitted from the Italian celebrities in our Temple of Fame. For it was this Epicurean on the Chair of Peter who evoked at his court the Golden Age for poets, literati, lute-players, and buffoons.

If we place third on our list of masters Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), our readers will require no further information concerning this personality, since his autobiography has depicted it with as much verve as presumption. As artist the goldsmith Cellini is superior to the mannered bronze-sculptor and medallist. For even his medals, five of which are authenticated by the information he gives in his *Life* concerning them, while four others are merely attributed to him, suffer in the portraits, even when they are cast, from the dryness which is peculiar to the die-engraver, while the scenes on the reverses actually revolt us, partly by vacancy and poverty of artistic conception, partly by the appalling vulgarity, the utterly ignoble commonplaceness of the allegories. This is, for example, the case in one of his two medals of Clement VII.,



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one of the results of his work as Master of the Papal Mint in the years 1529-1533 (Pl. XXX., 1). It was struck to commemorate the peace sealed between the Emperor and Pope, and this is symbolised by the figure of Discord chained to the Temple of Janus, and Peace, who with a torch sets fire to a pile of weapons and implements of war. The same obverse, with Moses striking water from the rock on the reverse, was repeated on the occasion of the erection by the Pope of the celebrated fountain at Orvieto. Better, however, is the cast medal of later date of Pietro Bembo (Pl. XXX., 3), the well-known *bel esprit* among the cardinals of the Cinquecento, who could boast of having—in all honour—enjoyed the favour of Lucrezia Borgia when Duchess of Ferrara, and of Catarina Cornaro, the dethroned Queen of Cyprus. But here, also, how poor, nay even how absurd, is the effect of the winged horse soaring towards heaven! Involuntarily the beholder asks: What has become of the poet whom he ought to bear on high? Has he been lost by the way? Finally we must give prominence to the medal of Ercole II. of Este, which Cellini, according to his own statement, made in 1540 (Pl. XXX., 4). It was believed to

## Florentine Medals

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be lost, until an example, unfortunately without a reverse, came to light in the Goethe Museum at Weimar. We have therein an original cast from the wax model of the obverse, which, as is shown by the incompletely modelled armour in the centre of the bust, was not yet finished. Two almost imperceptible concentric circles mark the position for the inscription, which in our example (which has a thickness, entirely unusual in medals, of 14 cm.) was intended to be engraved. On the reverse, Cellini, as he himself informs us, placed the figure of Peace with the legend: "*Pretiosa in conspectu Domini.*"

Finally, the last of our four stragglers is one of the most important and productive medallists of the Cinquecento; as such, not only in former days the privileged favourite of the distinguished and elegant society of his time, but also in our own placed by many lovers of this branch of art before other more excellent artists. Pastorino de' Pastorini (1508-1592), descended from a family of shoemakers in the neighbourhood of Siena, went in his early years to Arezzo as a pupil of Guillaume Marcillat, the celebrated French painter on glass, and while still a youth (from 1531-1548) was frequently employed



## Italian Medals

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in this art in Siena and Rome. Not until much later did it occur to him to model portraits in wax, which he afterwards painted, and to try his hand also in casting medals and engraving dies. From 1552 onwards we find him at the mints of Parma, Reggio, Ferrara, and Novellara, until in 1576 he entered the service of the Grand-Duke Francesco of Tuscany as "*maestro di stucchi*" (stucco-worker). He never again left Florence during his lifetime. In the number of his medals, the dates of which lie between 1548 and 1578 (which does not, however, exclude the possibility that other undated medals may have been produced both earlier and later), he surpasses all other companions in his craft; we are acquainted with 190 pieces (of which about two dozen are merely attributed to him), and the number is constantly increased by others coming to light. The greater portion of them are signed with his initial, and almost all are devoid of reverses. He herein gives expression to a change, which had been introduced into the character and object of medals. The custom was abandoned of associating the portrait with the attributes or achievements in which the person depicted had outshone his contemporaries, or with any act of his life that would have assured him

## Florentine Medals

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the remembrance of after generations. Even without such qualifications men considered themselves worthy of being immortalised in bronze, and demanded from the medal nothing more than a portrait. The medal, in fulfilling this demand, now sacrificed the more dignified and monumental stylistic treatment, which we so often encounter in the masterpieces of the Quattrocento, to a more intimate portraiture of the individual. Not only does it reproduce the portrait in a version as close as possible to life, but it seeks by the most accurate fidelity in the details of dress and ornament to apprehend and bring out its connection with the world around. This character, besides a highly developed feeling for grace, attractiveness, and sensuous charm in the presentation of the likeness, as well as of taste in arrangement, impresses itself on the works of Pastorino and explains their popularity both in former and in present times. On the other hand, they almost entirely lack the depth of conception, the force, the feeling of throbbing vitality, which so thrill us in his predecessors. "What a portrait! but, alas! a portrait only," are we tempted to exclaim in the presence of his highest creations, which—and this is equally characteristic both of the period and of the



## Italian Medals

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artist—for the most part celebrate female beauty in named and unnamed, known and unknown models. The few examples which we have chosen from the works of the master may serve to elucidate and justify what we have said.

The busts of the two great celebrities Ariosto and Titian (Pl. XXX., 2, 9) belong to his best works, thanks to their unassuming simplicity and the absence of that affected pose which detracts from the impression conveyed by so many of Pastorino's male portraits. The softly defined head of Atalanta Donati (Pl. XXX., 7), a Siennese poetess of the middle of the sixteenth century, shows how the artist occasionally allowed himself to be influenced by the example of antique gems. On the other hand, the matronly head of Girolama Orsini (Pl. XXX., 6), wife of Pierluigi Farnese, the dissolute son of Paul III., and first Duke of Parma and Piacenza, with the picturesquely draped widow's veil over her head, has the appearance of an impression from the life; and that of the otherwise unknown Beatrice da Siena (Pl. XXX., 5) is entirely modern both in conception and costume. The last-named medal has, moreover, a reverse—utterly banal, it is true. In the gentle, innocent countenance of the youth (Pl. XXXI., 3)



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BENVENUTO CELLINI, PASTORINO DA SIENA





## Florentine Medals

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we can scarcely foresee the man who was to become the refined author of the formerly much admired *Pastor Fido*, Battista Guarini; equally little, in Plate XXX., 8, do we recognise the splendour-loving Cardinal Ippolito of Este, the second of this name, who survives in the memory of posterity mainly as the patron of Tasso and the builder of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli. The two succeeding medals give the portraits of two distinguished princely women. Plate XXXI., 1, is that of Margaret of Parma, natural daughter of Charles V., who was married first to Alessandro Medici (the union scarcely lasted a year), and secondly to Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma. She became regent of the Netherlands in 1559, and is known from Goethe's *Egmont*. Plate XXXI., 2, is the portrait of Lucrezia Medici, daughter of the Grand-Duke Cosimo I.; a victim to political schemes, she was married at the age of thirteen (as represented in our medal) to Alfonso II. of Este, and poisoned three years later, probably by her husband himself. Lastly, we have the exceptionally fine profile (Pl. XXXI., 4), as intellectually animated as it is splendidly attired, of Alberto Lollio, the founder of the Accademia degli Elevati at Ferrara, the type of the distinguished scholar of the Cinque-



## Italian Medals

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cento; and the portraits of the two Gonzaga princesses—Margaret, sister of that Bonifazio of Montferrat whose medal by the hand of the painter Caroto we reproduced in Plate XIV., 1, and wife of Federigo II., first Duke of Mantua; and Eleanora, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I., who, as wife of Guglielmo Gonzaga, was from 1561 the daughter-in-law of Margaret (Pl. XXXI., 5 and 6).



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PASTORINO DA SIENA





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THE MEDALLISTS IN ROME





## THE MEDALLISTS IN ROME

**D**URING the entire Renaissance the Eternal City never offered the fostering soil from which it was possible for great artistic individualities to arise. Were any work of importance to be produced, it was necessary to import the creative power from elsewhere. Thus no single one of the pictorial monuments in the grand style, and scarcely one of the pieces of sculpture which we now admire in the churches and palaces of Rome, is of native origin. And even the foreign masters of foremost rank, who were summoned thither, had no sooner finished their tasks than they hurried away. We must descend to the brilliant times of Julius II. to find a Bramante, a Raffaello, or a Michael Angelo residing permanently in Rome. It was otherwise, it is true, with artists of inferior rank. They came and remained willingly, because in Rome the chief parts were



## Italian Medals

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allotted to them, while had they continued in their native cities they would have been obliged to remain in the background.

An exception was formed by the goldsmiths and jewellers. The luxury and splendour which, in accordance with old traditional custom, the Curia displayed in their productions, and the wealth of commissions which constantly accrued to them in consequence, induced the first masters of this branch of art, especially from Milan and Florence, to settle permanently under the wings of the Vatican. In harmony with the close connection which we have everywhere observed between the art of the goldsmith and that of the medallist, we are naturally led to expect a brilliant development of medallic art in Rome. But precisely the contrary is the case. Beyond the Curia and the circles immediately connected with it, nowhere did the art meet with such scant approval, nowhere with so little demand. The extensive families of the proud Roman nobility, the Colonna, Orsini, Savelli, and Gactani, among others, showed it so little favour, that two dozen medals cover the total of the collection which they bequeathed to posterity. What a difference in comparison with Florence and Venice!

## The Medallists in Rome

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We are, therefore, able to mention only one medallist, who—though of foreign parentage—was at least born in Rome: Giancristoforo Romano. But he, too—as we have already seen—was almost invariably absent from his native city, and only one of his medals belongs to Rome. Whatever activity is to be found there in this department of art is limited to a few masters, who, with one exception, had all come from the North, having migrated from Lombardy when already finished artists. That a development of the art in Rome, as important as that displayed by Ferrara, Mantua, Venice, and Florence, was altogether out of the question, is accordingly self-evident. The medallists brought with them their already-developed style and continued to exercise it, unmoved by their surroundings, uninfluenced by the "milieu" in which they lived and worked.

The chief exception to this rule is provided by the earliest of them. This is Cristoforo di Geremia (*circa* 1430 until after 1475), the scion of a Mantuan family of goldsmiths, and as a goldsmith himself experienced and esteemed. He must early have exchanged his ancestral city for Rome, for already



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in 1456 he returned to Mantua for a time. From 1461 until 1465 we find him in the Eternal City, "*dilecto fameglio*" (as he is called by his patron in a letter) of the Cardinal Camerlengo Lodovico Scarampi, the efficient general of the papal army under Eugenius IV. and his successors. Cristoforo even accompanied his patron to his summer quarters—in 1461 to Perugia, in 1462 to Florence. What more natural, therefore, than to suppose that he made the medal of the cardinal, the only one of Scarampi that we possess (Pl. XXXII., 1)? The assumption, in fact, is confirmed by the similarity that exists between this medal and Cristoforo's authenticated masterpiece—the medal of Alfonso I. of Naples, of which we are about to speak. It is only necessary to compare the strong profile of both pieces, their flat and yet so expressive modelling, the peculiar disposition of the hair in wedge-shaped strands, the form of lettering with the characteristic "G." The reverse of the Scarampi medal, with the antique triumphal procession and the façade of the temple in the background, also points conclusively to Rome as its place of origin. Probably, too, we possess a still earlier work of Cristoforo, belonging to his first Roman period, in the

## The Medallists in Rome

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frequently repeated medal of the year 1455, representing Cardinal Pietro Barbo, afterwards Pope Paul II. (Plate XXXII., 2). Some examples of it were discovered in Rome in 1857, during building alterations in the walls of the cellars of the palace begun by this pope in this same year, the so-called Palazzo di Venezia.

But our artist produced his masterpiece in the signed medal of Alfonso I., which in style is one of the best and most valuable productions of the medallic art of the later Quattrocento. It is the more worthy of admiration from the fact that it was taken not from life, but modelled at least ten years after the death of the King (Pl. XXXII., 3). Friedländer inferred this simply from its mature Mantegna-like style, but we believe ourselves able to furnish in addition a material proof of the fact. The cuirass of the King is throughout identically the same as that of Federigo da Montefeltre on his medal by Clemens Urbinas of the year 1468 (see above, Pl. XX., 2). The dignity of the sitter, however, forbids us to suppose that he would have allowed his portrait to be depicted clad in Alfonso's armour as it is given on Cristoforo's medal. On the other hand, the



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assumption that Federigo may have acquired the armour as a gift which fell to him out of the property left by the King, is untenable from the circumstance that, on both the pieces in question, not the armour only, but also the drapery of the mantle thrown over it is identically alike. It appears, therefore, that as far as external arrangement is concerned Cristoforo followed the example set by the medal of Clemens Urbinas, and consequently did not execute his own until after 1468. The medal of Paolo de Ragusa (Pl. XX., 3), however, evidently served him as the model for the portrait of Alfonso; so strikingly do the profile, the arrangement of the hair, and the pinched-looking ear agree in both.

That our master was conversant with the practice of "restitution," that he probably even took pleasure in it, is also shown by his second authenticated medal. It is that which bears the profile of the Emperor Augustus on the obverse and a representation of Concordia Augusta, after Roman coins, on the reverse; after Roman coins also are pieced together the inscriptions (in part mistaken) on both sides—even to the S(enatus) C(onsulto) in the exergue of the reverse. Our piece is characteristic both of the attitude of the

## The Medallists in Rome

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Roman Renaissance to antiquity and of our master. We see how he allowed himself to be entirely ensnared by the great memories of the world in which he lived: for even the far superior and more delicately executed reverse of the Alfonso medal, with the figure of the King crowned by Mars and Bellona, is essentially nothing more than a *pasticcio* after the motives of ancient coins. These are all the works from the capable hand of Cristoforo that have come down to us, and equally scanty is our information concerning his fortunes during the later years of his life. On the death of his patron, Scarampi (1465), he entered the Papal service, and the fact that in 1468 the restoration of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius was entrusted to him testifies to the esteem in which his powers were held. The statue at this time still stood on the piazza of the Lateran, where, through the entire Middle Ages, under the name of Caballo di Constantino, it had been accounted one of the typical monuments of Rome.

Cristoforo must have died early in the reign of Paul II.'s successor, since not he but his nephew Lysippus received the commission to execute the new Pope's medal. So we are told by Raffaël da Volterra, who wrote at the beginning of the



## Italian Medals

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sixteenth century, and in whom as an eye-witness we must place belief. It is true that he says nothing more concerning this artist, who is mentioned by no authority, and to whom none of the medals of Sixtus IV. can be ascribed on any convincing grounds. Fortunately, however, two signed pieces of the master can be identified—one of Giulio Marasca, which exists, indeed, only in an engraving of the year 1610; the second, on the other hand, is a unique piece in the collection of Prosper Valton, the heir of Armand, in Paris. It is the medal of Marinus Philethicus, a poet and scholar, who was teaching in the University of Rome in 1473 (Pl. XXXII., 4). The obverse displays the head of the scholar in profile wearing a laurel wreath; on the reverse is a copy of the pelican of Pisano's medal of Vittorino, with the inscription in Greek, "The work of Lysippus the younger." By means of comparison with these authenticated works, several others may be ascribed to him. Such is the medal, extant in six varieties, of Giovanni Luigi Toscani, some of which bear the signature L(ysippus) P(ictor) (Pl. XXXII., 6); further, the medals of Giovanni Francesco Marasca, Antonio da Santamaria, Francesco Massimo, Francesco Vitali, Parthenius (Ippolito Au-



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CRISTOFORO DI GEREMIA, LYSIPPUS





## The Medallists in Rome

rispa), Pier Paolo Mellini, Militias Jesuallus.<sup>1</sup> Besides the similarity of style and the partiality of their maker for Greek legends, they have all in common the circumstance that the personages depicted can be shown to have been abbreviators, *uditores di camera*, advocates and notaries to the Curia between 1473 and 1484, and are all more or less youthful and similarly attired. And to Rome also point two medals representing Giovanni Candida, probably a pupil of Lysippus, with whom we shall presently meet. On the smaller, which is a unique piece in the Este Museum at Modena, he is still represented as a boy, but, judging from the dress, already a pupil at a clerical seminary. On the larger oval piece in the possession of G. Dreyfus, in Paris, he is depicted as a young cleric in the like costume (Pl. XXXII., 5). Both pieces, especially the larger, in naïveté of conception and softness of modelling, are among the pearls of Quattrocento medallic art. And if to the pieces already cited we add the medal of the year 1478 of the nephew of the Pope, Raffaello Riario, created a cardinal at the age of seventeen, with its reverse, excellent alike in composi-

<sup>1</sup> [The medal of Alfonso Morosini (Arm., III., 182 C) in the British Museum seems also to be by Lysippus.—G. F. H.]



## Italian Medals

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tion and chasing (Pl. XXXIII., 1), representing St. George fighting the dragon (a play upon the titular of the cardinal, S. Giorgio in Velabro), we do it not only on the ground of similarity of style, but also in accordance with the evidence of Raffael of Volterra, which shows us the artist engaged in the service of Sixtus IV. In this case, however, we must also credit him with the medal of Catelano Casali, later Protanotary of the same year, since its obverse appears occasionally coupled with that of the medal of Riario already cited, to say nothing of its similarity in style to the authenticated pieces of Lysippus.

We now come to one of the most memorable masters of the medallic art, the only one whom the Eternal City did not receive from the North; whom, on the contrary, she was obliged to surrender to it, and even to the other side of the Alps. Giovanni Candida (born before 1450, died after 1504), whom we have just mentioned, owed his origin to Naples, and was a member of the branch of the noble family of the Filangieri which still bears his name. As we have seen above, he came while quite a youth to Rome with the intention of devoting himself to the clerical career, and seems there to have been

## The Medallists in Rome

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imbued by Lysippus with the love of art and to have received from him his first instruction in it. The only one of his medals which with entire security can be attributed to these early days in Rome is that of Antonio Graziadei (Pl. XXXIII., 2). Equally in style and arrangement it betrays the influence of Lysippus. Graziadei is here depicted as a young magister, before 1481, when he was appointed imperial orator (as he is designated on his later medal mentioned on p. 112). Subsequently, as Abbreviator and confidential employé of the Papal Signet Office, he rose to high dignities. In any case, the medal appeared before 1475, since in this year we find Candida already secretary in the service of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and, after his death in 1477, in that of his daughter Mary and her husband Maximilian, for whom in the same year, shortly after their marriage and later (1479 or 1482), he designed a second medal (Pl. XXXIII., 3). He seems on one occasion temporarily to have incurred the displeasure of his patrons, for in 1479 he cast a medal of his jailer in the fortress of Lille, Jean Miette, whom he designates thereon as "Custos Carcer(is) Candidae" (Pl. XXXIII., 4). It was apparently this unpleasant experience that caused him on



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regaining his liberty to enter the service of Maximilian's rival, Louis XI., King of France, in 1482 or 1483. Here his fortunate star shone at length in full splendour. Not only did the artist in him ripen to full development, but his talents as statesman and diplomatist acquired him the entire favour of his young sovereign, Charles VIII., the successor of Louis XI. After having compiled for him a sketch of the history of France, he was appointed Royal Councillor, and in 1491 was sent to Rome as member of an embassy to settle various questions between France and the Curia. Two years later he is again in Rome on a secret mission, and in 1494 he accompanies the King on his Italian expedition, on which occasion he received the title of Apostolic Protonotary. At the same time he by no means neglected the exercise of his art. A number of the chief dignitaries of the State owe their immortalisation in effigy to him, among them Robert Briçonnet, who in a letter of thanks for his two medals calls him *Summus et orator et historicus ac sculptorinae artis atque plastices hac aetate omnium consummatissimus*. During his passing sojourn in Rome he also seems to have set his spatula and crucible in activity; this is shown by the medals of the Uditore di Rota,

## The Medallists in Rome

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Guillaume des Perriers—known as a Maecenas by the erection of several sculptured altars in the churches of the Eternal City—and by the double portrait of Giuliano della Rovere (afterwards Pope Julius II.) (Pl. XXXIII., 7), and his brother Clement—that is, provided that these latter were not cast during some occasional sojourn of these personages in France (Giuliano is shown to have been there in the years 1494, 1496, and 1497). We have even five medals from Candida's hand belonging to the last years of his life, among them those of the later King Francis I., his mother, and his sister (dated 1504). The first (Pl. XXXIII., 5) is not only of importance as the earliest portrait of the prince, at this time ten years of age, but also on account of the reverse, the Salamander in flames, the well-known *impresa* of the King, which now appears for the first time, and was therefore probably designed by Candida. To the hitherto known creations of the artist we have to add as his latest work the medal of Giovanni Francesco Rovere, Bishop of Turin and Prefect of the City of Rome. Since Rovere acquired this dignity in 1504, it follows that his medal, the inscription of which shows that he already possessed it, was cast at the earliest during the same year.



## Italian Medals

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Candida must have died soon afterwards, as we lack all further information concerning him.

If we now survey the eighteen authenticated pieces of our artist with regard to their style and value, it is evident that taken collectively they show a pronounced and well-defined artistic personality. At most the conception of character in the later medals is somewhat freer and more serious, and the modelling fuller. The artistic inheritance from Lysippus is perceptible in all, in the earlier naturally more than in the later. The earlier are, at the same time, marked by youthful grace and by a refined charm of treatment. The later are larger in dimension, more effective and more decorative in arrangement. An attractive naturalism is, however, common to all, combined with an unassuming sense of life, and a conscious simplicity that avoids all superfluous accessories. In keeping with this, the reverses—with the single exception of the piece last described—display merely arms, inscriptions or initials, except where they are used for a second portrait. In the modelling, emphasis is laid on the effect of the silhouette; in order to accentuate it our master refrains from entering into details, and at times merely suggests such

## The Medallists in Rome

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features as the hair and ears. Nay, especially in his later works, in the modelling of the eyes, which are relatively too small, and in the way in which he sets them deep in the socket under the heavy brows, he at times snaps his fingers at strict fidelity to nature. Where the casting of his medals has remained untouched, it is always very careful; but, unfortunately, many casts have been completely ruined by subsequent chasing at the hands of others.

Following him comes the more widely known and most celebrated of the Roman medallists: Cristoforo Foppa, surnamed Caradosso (after 1452-1527). During the first half of his creative period he belongs to his native Milan, where, as son of a celebrated goldsmith, he early obtained recognition by the excellence of his productions in this art, and numerous commissions from the splendour-loving Court of the Sforza. Of such works we have, unfortunately, inherited nothing but literary information at the hands of Vasari, Cellini, and Ambrogio Leone. On the other hand, we have some sculptures and plaques by Caradosso, as well as several coins, struck with the dies cut by our artist for Francesco Sforza as early as 1466, and subsequently for his three suc-



## Italian Medals

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cessors; finally, also, not only some small struck medals of Lodovico il Moro, but also the two larger cast medals of Francesco and Lodovico Sforza. The former (Pl. XXXIII., 8), as the entry of the prince into Milan in 1450 on the reverse testifies, did not appear until long afterwards, probably, indeed, not much before the second (Pl. XXXIII., 6), which—as is evident from a scene depicted on the reverse—was cast to commemorate the entry of il Moro into Genoa in 1488. Here, as also in his later Roman works, the goldsmith does not belie his profession; in contrast with the broad treatment of the earliest great masters of the medal, Caradosso carries his careful manipulation into the elaboration of the smallest details; “richness of composition, beauty of line, elegance of execution are common to them all. The miniature portraits on his coins are as light and delicate as if formed in wax, and herein resemble the most beautiful ancient coins.” Such is Friedländer's somewhat too favourable judgment, for it is just the confused subjects of the reverses of his early medals, overcrowded with figures, that sin against the laws of the art. The master, it is true, improved in this respect during his Roman period.



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LYSIPTUS, CANDIDA, CARADOSSO





## The Medallists in Rome

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When Lodovico Sforza was taken prisoner by the French in 1499, and the splendour of the Court at Milan thus came to a sudden end, Caradosso followed his friend and fellow-artist, Bramante, who had already settled in Rome. Introduced by him as well as by Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, brother of il Moro, to the papal Court, he found under Julius II. and his immediate successors ample employment as goldsmith, medallist, and engraver, until his death. In proof of this we have the numerous coins of Julius II. and Leo X., struck from his dies. Of medals, on the contrary, we possess only one, representing Bramante (Pl. XXXIV., 1; the second is a later copy), two with slightly different reverses of Julius II., and one of Cardinal Ascanio Sforza (its attribution on account of the different style and the different character of the letters, is not entirely incontestable). These Roman pieces are indisputably Caradosso's masterpieces; in spite of the minute modelling and chasing, in which they already almost approach the struck medal, they render character by a genuinely monumental conception. We have only to compare them with the later medals of the Cinquecento in order to recognise their artistic superiority. The enlightened master is revealed also



## Italian Medals

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in the designs on the reverses : not so much in the Bramante medal, with the dry forms of the architecture of St. Peter's, in affectation of the antique, in the background, as in the two medals of Julius II., with the model of the same building (fixing the appearance of the piece in the year 1506) and the Shepherd, who drives his flock into the safe fold (Pl. XXXIV., 2).

Finally, we may here cite the large struck medal of the same pope with the conversion of Saul on the reverse (Pl. XXXIV., 3), which among the remaining medals of Caradosso produced by the same method indisputably deserves the prize. It was apparently produced as an allusion to the revolt and subjugation of Alfonso I. of Ferrara in the years 1510-1512. Connoisseurs, it is true, waver in their ascription between Francia and Caradosso ; a comparison with the last cast medal of Julius, however, is sufficient to convince the critic of the entirely surprising similarity of the portrait type in both—taking into consideration, that is to say, the different technique by which the two pieces are produced. The way, too, in which the edge of the stiff cope is bent round the head is precisely similar in both ; on the other hand, it is different

## The Medallists in Rome

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from that on the medal of Alexander, which is probably due to Francia (Pl. XIX., 3). Decisive, however, is the fact that our medal entirely corresponds with the coins, the dies of which were cut by Caradosso, so that in it we have to recognise the testone which he made for the coins in larger dimensions. The style of the reverse also has much greater resemblance to similar designs on the plaques and earlier medals of Caradosso, than to those of Francesco Francia.

If, in conclusion, with the medals which, even although unsigned, are for other reasons accredited to our master, and of which we have just spoken, we rank the two of Cardinal Scaramuzza Trivulzio, we are induced to do so on stylistic as well as historic grounds. The portrait as well as the reverse of the larger example (Pl. XXXIV., 4; that of the smaller is smooth), with the figure of Prudence, draped after the antique, walking over a dragon, indicates our artist by its modelling and extraordinarily fine chasing. The sitter, who like Caradosso himself belonged to Milan, was made Bishop of Como in 1508, was raised to the rank of Cardinal in 1517, became Bishop of Piacenza in 1522, and on account of his knowledge of business was held in high esteem at the Curia.



## Italian Medals

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In 1527 he was forced by the Sack of Rome to return to his native city, where he died soon after. His medals, the inscriptions of which designate him as Cardinal and Bishop of Como, must therefore have been produced between 1517 and 1522, and whom besides Caradosso can we cite who could have made them in Rome during this interval?

For the works of the master who was active here during the same period, and whom as the last of the Roman medallists we have now to consider, differ too much from the pieces in question to allow him to be taken into consideration. This master is Gian Pietro Crivelli (1463-1552), descended from the Milanese family of the name, in whom the goldsmith's art had been hereditary for generations, and who were able to boast of having given a pope to the Church in Urban III. as early as 1185. Our master, like so many companions of his craft from North Italy and Florence, had migrated to the "Paradise of Goldsmiths," as Rome of the Renaissance has appropriately been called, before 1508, in order there to acquire renown and wealth, and in both respects was eminently successful. For, on the one hand, he became President of his Guild and papal Cavaliere, and was awarded the praise of



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CARADOSSO, GIAN PIETRO CRIVELLI





## The Medallists in Rome

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*celeberrimus in urbe aurifex*, as he is styled in a document ; on the other, he acquired property outside the gates of Rome and several houses within the city, of which the dwelling in the Via de' Banchi, which he built for himself in 1539 when an old man of seventy-five, is still preserved. The Turin Cabinet possesses a unique piece in a medal with his portrait (Pl. XXXIV., 5), as is shown by his name signed in a cartouche on the reverse. Since he there appears as a man of fifty at least, it must have been produced during his Roman period, and is indeed probably a work of his own hand. For the unique medal of the Milanese provost, Benedetto Crivelli, evidently a relation of our Gian Pietro, preserved in the Brera, is in all points so closely related to that of Gian Pietro that the same artist must be accepted for both. And as one medal was cast in Milan and the other in Rome, whom can we with greater probability name as their creator than Gian Pietro Crivelli himself? True, the fact of his having exercised this branch of art has not been proved, but his renown as goldsmith goes far to justify the assumption.





THE STRUCK MEDALS OF THE CINQUECENTO

I

THE MEDALS OF THE MEDICEAN COURT






## THE STRUCK MEDALS OF THE CINQUECENTO

### I

#### THE MEDALS OF THE MEDICEAN COURT

N Florence more than elsewhere the practice of the medallic art in the Cinquecento was in closest dependence on the princely Court. Its representatives are the goldsmiths who were kept in full occupation by the lavish and plentiful commissions of the members of the Court, and of whom the city produced a series of excellent masters. In order to rivet their energies still more closely to the Court, the greater number were attracted to the grand-ducal mint, where they found assured and remunerative occupation as wardens, die-engravers, or strikers. Moreover, the special taste shown by some of the grand-dukes for coins and medals offered opportunities to the artists. Vasari



## Italian Medals

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records of Cosimo I. that in his *Guarda-roba*—which we should call his “Cabinet of Art”—he kept an immense number of gold, silver, and bronze medals, most beautifully arranged. Of his successor Francesco we are told that he exhibited a part of the grand-ducal collection of coins and medals in the room of the Uffizi now known as the Tribuna, and allowed it to be open to the public—a fact which shows the high esteem in which he held these objects as works of art, and how important he considered it that laymen and artists should be able to enjoy them and gain instruction and culture by the sight.

Apart from some masters, such as Salvatore dell' Avacchia, Vincenzo Lupicini, Costantino de' Servi, Domenico Santini, Raffaello Casellesi, Francesco Mocchi, of whom only isolated medals, ascribed to them by recent research with more or less justification, are known, the earliest artist in Florence who claims our notice is Francesco Ortensi, called Dal Prato (1512–1562). He was a kind of universal genius, who worked not only as a goldsmith and medallist, but also as a sculptor in bronze, as armourer, and even as painter. Vasari, who praises him highly, mentions among the many medals which

## Medals of the Medici

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he is supposed to have made, one of Duke Alessandro Medici and a second of Clement VII. The former is no longer known ; the latter, however, has been preserved (Pl. XXXV., 1), a capable and vigorous work, in which the spirit of good art still breathes. The Christ bound to the column on the reverse is an allusion to the sufferings which were brought upon the Pope in the Sack of Rome. The piece must consequently be an early youthful work of Dal Prato's.

Approximately contemporary with him are the two brothers Poggini, sons of an esteemed engraver of gems. The elder, Giovanpaolo (1518-1582), was employed by Cosimo I. as goldsmith as well as engraver of gems and dies. He went to Brussels in 1555, where he was commissioned by Philip II. to engrave the dies for the new coinage for the provinces of the Netherlands, and thence in 1560 to the Royal Court in Spain, where he remained until his death. Here he produced the only medals with which we are acquainted—a series of eighteen pieces of Philip II., his sister Juana of Portugal, and his four wives. In the reproduction of two of these, given in Plate XXXV., 3, the reader will be able to appreciate the minute delicacy of the workmanship, which is conspicuous even here,



## Italian Medals

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and at the same time to enjoy the unusual vivacity, especially of the female portrait.

Much more abundant is the work of the younger brother, Domenico (1520-1590), which includes no fewer than forty authenticated pieces, and about ten more which are ascribed to him. Appointed die-engraver to the Grand-Duke in 1556, he was employed not only as such, but also repeatedly as sculptor and decorator for festivals, in the latter capacity especially in the marriage ceremonial of Francesco, the successor to the throne, and Joanna of Austria in the year 1565. As examples of his medals, we give that of Cosimo I., struck in 1561 (Pl. XXXV., 2), as well as a second of Francesco (Pl. XXXV., 4), which, since its reverse bears the portrait of his young wife, must have been produced soon after 1565. In the dry precision of the treatment of both portraits we perceive only too plainly that, while engaged on them, the artist kept the intention of making them serve for the dies of coins only too exclusively before his eyes. That he was capable of a much freer, more artistic conception is shown by his cast medals, of which, since it has entirely preserved the impress of the gifted improvisation of the wax model, we reproduce that



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## Medals of the Medici

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of the celebrated historian Benedetto Varchi (Pl. XXXV., 5). Poggini spent the last five years of his life in Rome as Master of the Papal Mint. To this period belong the ten medals of Sixtus V. (Pl. XXXV., 6), of the Pope's sister, and of Niccolò Todini, the Governor of S. Angelo; the last with an original view of the fortress on the reverse.

The most prolific of the Florentine medallists of the Cinquecento—Pastorino excepted—was Pier Paolo Galeotti (died 1584), called "Il Romano," from the place of his birth, which, however, he exchanged in his early youth for Florence. We possess seventy-two authenticated pieces by his hand, of which no fewer than sixteen bear the portrait of Duke Cosimo I. To judge from the considerable number of Milanese and Genoese personages depicted, he appears to have worked in North Italy also. In 1575 he was appointed one of the die-engravers of the papal mint, but never seems to have made any prolonged sojourn in Rome. From 1550 until his death he was employed at the grand-ducal mint. Vasari cites among his works twelve medals of Cosimo I., the reverses of which depict the most important works of peace executed during his reign—the sanitation of Pisa, the water-supply of Florence,



## Italian Medals

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the foundation of a city on Elba, the building of the Laurentiana, the Palazzo Pitti, etc. All have been preserved: eight are even extant in marble replicas on a larger scale on the pedestal of a piece of sculpture, the purpose of which can no longer be ascertained, now standing in the Museum of the Refectory of the Ognisanti. We reproduce one of these medals (Pl. XXXVI., 1), and moreover give as demonstration of the master's manner that of the Genoese poet and philosopher Giambattista Grimaldi, with its pictorially conceived reverse, Prometheus chained to the rock (Pl. XXXVI., 2).

Gaspero Romanelli, who was born in Aquila, also worked in Florence between 1560 and 1580. A medal, which is no longer extant, of the author Antonio Francesco Doni is attested by Doni's letter of thanks to the artist; four others of the scholar Pietro Vettori are attributed to him on the strength of the signature "G. R. F." The private and Court medallist of the two successors of Cosimo I., more especially of the third Grand-Duke Ferdinand I., was Michele Mazzafirri (1530 until 1597); besides two medals of Francesco I., we are acquainted with no fewer than eleven of Ferdinand and his wife Christine, of Lorraine, which were struck from the

## Medals of the Medici

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master's dies (Pl. XXXVI., 3 and 4). The filigree-like delicacy of the elaboration of all the accessories marks them as the works of a goldsmith's hand. Indeed, Mazzafirri's fame as goldsmith surpassed that of the medallist, and documents prove that he received a great number of commissions for goldsmith's works, although of the works themselves none unfortunately remain.

As we shall encounter the Florentine Giorgio Rancetti (whose work in his native city is only attested as goldsmith) as a medallist in Rome under Clement VIII. and Paul V. until 1611, so, on the other hand, we must here place Gasparo Mola (died after 1649), a native of the territory of Como, since the greater number of his authenticated works are still extant in Florence, where the master is proved to have worked between 1598 and 1627. His skill as armourer and goldsmith is shown in the shield and parade helmet damascened with gold in the Museo Nazionale, which was long believed to be a work of Benvenuto Cellini. He appears before us as a medallist in a series of thirteen medals of the Grand-Dukes Ferdinand I., Cosimo II., and his wife Maria Maddalena of Austria (Pl. XXXVI., 5), and, finally, of Ferdinand II. In



## Italian Medals

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the conception of the physiognomy many of these are capable and fresh, while in the pompous and stiff arrangement they already sound the prelude to the excesses of the barocco in this respect. The extraordinary delicacy of the technical elaboration constantly demoralises the eye of the beholder whose taste is not quite assured. In the portrait of the widowed Grand-Duchess (after 1621) the master produced a piece which, as far as simplicity and expression are concerned, is worthy to rank beside the best creations of the Cinquecento (Pl. XXXVI., 7). His last years were spent in Rome, and we possess medals signed by him of Urban VIII. and Innocent X. of the years 1640 and 1649.

The series of Florentine medallists closes with an artist who only worked outside his native city. After having served with the Spanish army in the Netherlands, Giuliano Giannini settled in Brussels about 1580; and as he was still living there in 1589, at an advanced age and as a pensioner of the Treasury of Brabant, it seems probable that he had spent the intervening years in the employment of the Mint at Brussels. Of signed medals by his hand we are acquainted with one of Ottavio Farnese and his wife Margaret of Parma; two of their son Alessandro, Governor of the Netherlands; and one of the



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P. P. GALEOTTI, MAZZAFIRRI, GASPARO MOLA, GIUL. GIANNINI





## Medals of the Medici

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Duke of Alba. The last (Pl. XXXVI., 6) is so life-like in conception and modelling that we are unable to allow it to pass as a restoration, as its date (1568) would show it to be. We are obliged, on the contrary, to assume that it was made by Giannini in the year 1568, while he still remained in the military service.

If we review once more the achievements of the medallic art which flourished under the sun of Medicean favour, respectable though many of its productions may appear, we are conscious on the whole of a sad lack of individuality. What a wealth of artistic types, and—as its consequence—what an amount of variety, what diversity of artistic conceptions and forms, awake our surprise and compel us to ever-renewed admiration as we survey the masterpieces of the Quattrocento medallists! Here, on the contrary, everything seems to have been produced in one and the same workshop—so monotonous, so devoid of individuality is the stamp borne by these productions. If it is permitted to judge the creators by their works, then these artists have failed to experience what Goethe considered the greatest happiness of mortals, and not knowing it themselves, have not been able to impart it.



## Italian Medals

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### II

#### THE PAPAL MINT AND ITS MASTERS

The custom of striking a portrait on coins was in modern times first revived by the popes. After Sixtus IV. had set the example to his successors, the papal mint found it necessary to employ artists who were better fitted to execute this demand than the ordinary workman of the mint. Thus we find engaged for this purpose goldsmiths and engravers of gems of the fame of a Simone di Giovanni and Pier Maria da Pescia, of Florence; of a Paolo di Giordano and Leonardo Corbolini, of Rome; of Lorenzo Grosso, of Genoa. But as early as the end of the Quattrocento medallists were also occasionally employed as die-engravers at the papal Zecca. We have seen that Francesco Francia struck the Bolognese coins for Julius II., that Caradosso did the like in Rome for the same pope and his successor, Leo X., that Vittore Gambello made the dies for coins during Leo's reign, and that under Clement VII., Benvenuto Cellini presided over the papal mint from 1529 until 1533.

On his departure, in the reign of Paul III., his place as

## The Papal Mint

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engraver of gems was filled until the year 1545 by Giovanni Bernardi, of Castalbolognese (1496-1553), famous even in our own days for the "Farnese Casket" in the Naples Museum. While, however, we possess more than thirty plaques made by him, the number of his medals is limited to three of the Emperor Charles V. and Clement VII., which are certified by Vasari as authentic works. The best of these, with Joseph and his brethren on the reverse, was struck on the occasion of the return of the Medici to Florence after the siege of 1529. At the same time as Bernardi, Leone Leoni Arezzo also worked for some years (1537-1540) at the papal mint, but since his activity mainly belongs to North Italy we shall more fitly consider him in the next chapter.

On the other hand, in his artistic career Alessandro Cesati, il Grechetto (died after 1564), belongs entirely to Rome. Born in Cyprus of Italian parents, in 1538 he entered while young the house of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, uncle of Paul III., to the service of whose family he always remained faithful. He became Warden of the Papal Mint as early as 1540, and retained the office under Julius III., Pius IV., and Paul IV., until 1561. He then returned to his island home,



## Italian Medals

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where he soon afterwards died. Vasari extols him as an engraver of gems above all other masters of his time (some cameos of his are still extant), and also praises his medal of Paul III. with Alexander and the high priest on the reverse (Pl. XXXVII., 1), quoting the opinion attributed to Michael Angelo concerning it: "Now is the last hour of art come, since nothing better can be achieved." The romancer of Arezzo seems herein to have substituted his own opinion for that of his great patron. For even if we are forced to acknowledge the directness of conception and the expressive sureness of the modelling in the portrait, yet on the other hand, in the tasteless arrangement of the cope with the gigantic clasp, and still more in the scene on the reverse, the false and sickly manner and style of the later Cinquecento already make themselves apparent. The group of the high priest and his attendants may be tolerated, but the smart hero with the goat-like nose who kneels before him could never be held a just or worthy portrait of the great conqueror of the world. Nevertheless, the external skill of the composition cannot be denied. Besides this medal there are seven others of Paul III. and nine of Paul's successor, Julius III., as well

## The Papal Mint

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as one of Alessandro Farnese, which in all probability belong to Cesati; among them many which, in the unpretentious, simple modelling of the obverse and the more finished forms and harmonious conception of the reverse, surpass the piece just described. As proof of our assertion, the graceful reverse of one of the smaller medals of Paul, with the figure of the *Securitas Populi Romani*, may here find a place (Pl. XXXVII., 2). It may be observed as a curious fact, that the jubilee medal of Julius III. of the year 1550, to which Vasari calls attention, "*con un rovescio di quei prigionieri che al tempo degli antichi erano ne' lor giubilei liberati*," has lately come to light in a single example in the Museo Nazionale at Florence.

Somewhat later than Cesati, the Milanese Giovanni Antonio de Rossi (1517 until after 1575) appears in Rome. He came thither in 1544 from Venice, where he had worked as a gem engraver, and in the thirteen years of his sojourn produced medals of Pope Marcellus II. and Paul IV. (five pieces), which are still preserved. In 1557 he entered the service of Cosimo I., with a salary of two hundred ducats, in order to cut the large cameo on which is depicted the entire grand-ducal



## Italian Medals

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family. Although in a fragmentary condition, this cameo is still preserved in the Cabinet of Gems in the Uffizi. Besides this, two medals of Henry II. of France, cast on the occasion of the conquest of Calais in 1558, and also that of the author Giovanni Battista Gelli, belong to his four years' residence in Florence. Returning to Rome in 1560, he became Warden of the Papal Mint in Cesati's place, and as such made not only dies for coins, but medals of Cardinal Carlo Borromeo (1563), Pope Pius IV. (seven pieces), Pius V. (nine), and Gregory XIII. (three pieces). The medal of Henry II. (Pl. XXXVII., 3) may give an idea of Rossi's somewhat rough treatment of the relief, which does not reveal the style of the renowned engraver of gems.

Likewise in the latter years of Paul III., from 1546 onwards, and under Paul's successors, Giovanni Giacomo Bonzagna (1508-1565), a native of Parma, served until his death as Master of the Roman Zecca; after 1552 he was also Piombatore (the official who executed the papal bulls by stamping the lead seal upon them). The papal accounts contain the charges not only for his allowance, but for the works of goldsmithery and the medals which he made. Among

## The Papal Mint

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the last figures an entry of fifty gold ducats for medals struck to commemorate the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's at the Jubilee of the year 1550. On this ground seven such medals, which we still possess, have been ascribed to the master. The inscription on his tomb extols him besides as "a distinguished imitator of antique coins"—and it is therefore probable that many of the copies of Roman pieces, which have been preserved in such numbers until the present day, may date back to Bonzagna.

We are better informed concerning the work of his brother Gianfederigo, who died after 1586. He was active as sculptor, goldsmith,<sup>1</sup> medallist, and die-engraver. In the last capacity he was occupied at the papal mint from 1554 until 1561; medals of his dating up to 1575 are, however, extant. As he usually signed his works with his name or an equilateral triangle, a list of them can be compiled; there are more than fifty pieces, among which Paul III. is represented by five, other members of the Farnese family by nine, Paul IV. by three, Pius IV. by ten, Pius V. by fourteen, and Gregory XIII. by five medals. Unfortunately the artistic quality does not correspond to the number; they are works of desperate



## Italian Medals

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dryness of technique and of commonplace conception, inspired solely by the dictates of routine.

Somewhat later Parma supplied Rome with yet another artist in the person of Lorenzo Fragni, called "Il Parmense" (died after 1618), who appears in the accounts of the papal mint in the years 1572, 1576, and 1586. He was the private medallist of Gregory XIII., whom he immortalised in no fewer than twenty-seven pieces, while of his successor Sixtus V. he produced only five. Besides these we are only acquainted with one other medal of Fragni—that of the well-known Cardinal Cristoforo Madruzzi, Bishop of Trent. He signed his medals indifferently with "LP.," "LAU. P.," "L. PARM.," and between 1573 and 1586 with the date. The Paduan Ludovico Leoni is also proved by documents to have been at the papal mint during the same years. But only one of the many medals of Gregory XIII. bears his signature; the remainder must be sought for among the anonymous medals of this Pope. For the rest, we shall meet the master again at Padua, the chief seat of his activity.

The two brothers Niccolò and Emilio de Bonis, who had apparently come from Venice, worked under Sixtus V. and

Plate XXXVII



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CESATI. G. ANT. DE ROSSI. RANCETTI

Fine p. 199





## The Papal Mint

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the Popes who succeeded him. Niccolò is certified as having been die-engraver to the mint for the year 1591; his medals nevertheless are dated from 1580 until 1592. The earliest, and the only, medal which he struck of Gregory XIII. commemorates his extension of the Collegium Germanicum founded by Julius III. Then follow five medals of Sixtus V., nine of Gregory XIV., seven of Innocent IX., and four of Clement VIII. The younger brother also placed his art at the service of the same Popes from 1590 until 1600, and struck three medals of Sixtus V., two of Gregory XIV., one of Innocent IX., and six of Clement VIII. The reverses of the last display the portraits of Philip II. and Philip III. of Spain, Henry IV. and his wife Maria de' Medici—in allusion respectively to the absolution of the King, the Peace of Vervins, the Edict of Nantes, and the marriage of Henry IV. (1600).

The favourite medallist of the last-named Pope was, however, Giorgia Rancetti (*circa* 1550–1611), whom we have already mentioned as one of the masters employed at the Medicean Court. After he had removed to Rome in 1594 and been appointed engraver of coins to the Pope, he struck



## Italian Medals

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no fewer than twenty-five medals of Clement VIII., as well as one, in the last year of his life, of Paul V., Clement's second successor. We reproduce as an example of the master's manner one of his medals of Clement (Pl. XXXVII., 4), which was struck to commemorate the reversion of the Duchy of Ferrara to the Pope on the death of Alfonso II. of Este, and of the Pope's entry into the city on May 8th, 1598. The fact that the artist was unable to devise anything else for the reverse than a view of the city surrounded by its walls, which is besides altogether paltry and utterly devoid of monumental character, is significant of the poverty of the period in artistically effective ideas. We must, however, do our master the justice to admit that all his reverses do not show the same insignificance and poverty of thought. Where he has to depict papal ceremonies, however, and allegories of Peace, the Faith, and subjects of the like nature, he errs, as a rule, in overcrowding the compositions with tiny figures, and thus making them confused; or else satisfies himself with one stiff figure borrowed without scruple from the allegories which the painting and sculpture of his day produced in thousands upon thousands.

## The Papal Mint

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In the foregoing pages we have named only the leading masters among the medallists of Rome. Besides these a number may be cited, some of whom are known to us by name—Marco Arco, Pallante, Giovanni Melon, Gaspare Cambio, Domenico de' Compagni, Bernardo Passero, and Bartolommeo Argentario; some only by the initials—"M.B.R.," "C.S.," "FN," "FM"—with which they signed their works. Since their importance, not only with respect to the number of their productions, which was often limited to one or two pieces, but also with regard to the artistic value of these pieces, does not reach the level of the masters treated above, we must be satisfied with merely mentioning them. To two artists, however, we must dedicate a few words on account of the speciality of their achievements. Towards the end of the Cinquecento, Giovanni Paladino produced a series of papal medals, ranging from Martin V. (died 1431) to Pius V. (died 1572), using as models the original contemporary medals which were forthcoming or the restorations of the Quattrocento, so that his pieces—as far at least as the likeness of the portrait is concerned—deserve consideration. The Milanese Giovanni Battista Pozzi, who lived at the same time as Paladino, showed



## Italian Medals

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himself less scrupulous ; as a supplement to Paladino's series, he produced a complete set of medals from St. Peter to Alexander V. (died 1410), in which he never consulted any existing portraits, but let his imagination rule unchecked. His works consequently can claim no further interest.

### III

#### THE MEDALLISTS OF PADUA AND MILAN

In many respects essentially more independent of the general tendencies and of the development of the art of the Cinquecento than the medallie art of Florence and Rome was that of North Italy, more particularly in the two centres which we have now especially to consider—Padua and Milan. (With Venice up to the end of the sixteenth century we have already dealt, while Piedmont's contribution to our branch of art was so insignificant that we may well leave it out of consideration.)

One of the main factors which go far to explain this phenomenon is the circumstance that one at least of these cities in question possessed no independent mint in the Cinquecento. Padua consequently fortunately escaped the

## Padua and Milan

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demoralising influence which die-engraving exercised on the medallic art. Here, on the other hand, as in the very beginning of the Quattrocento, the example of antiquity ever challenged attention. Here in the middle of the Cinquecento, as we shall presently see, the systematic imitation, copying, not to say forgery, of antique works of plastic art, above all of coins, was cultivated. In Milan, on the contrary, the realism of Lombardy, which even in painting, at the time when mannerism was at its height in Tuscany, produced vigorous natures of the stamp of the Crespi and Procaccini, saved the medallic art from degeneration. The energetic individuality of some important masters helped it over the rocks of the most vicious mannerism. The fact that here more than elsewhere artists gave the preference to the cast over the struck medal, also naturally contributed to preserve to their creations the stamp of individual and artistically independent creations.

We begin our cursory review with Padua and with the earliest of its masters who claim our notice, with Valerio Belli (*circa* 1468-1546), who belonged, however, not to the city itself, but to neighbouring Vicenza. His fame as artist



## Italian Medals

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is chiefly based on his excellence as an engraver of gems. This is proved by the so-called Medicean Casket, which is still preserved in the Uffizi, presented by Clement VII. to King Francis I. on the occasion of the marriage of Catharine de' Medici, formed of twenty-four panels of crystal, carved with scenes from the life of Christ; it is further proved by thirty similar panels intended for a similar object, which were formerly private property (Pourtales Collection), but in our days have been scattered to the winds. Of his industry as a die-engraver, Belli himself informs us in his will, where he gives the number of pieces struck from dies which he made as 150, which corresponds, therefore, to at least half of this number of medals. The discovery during the sixties of the past century of an old list of the medals has made it possible to verify fifty of them. They are more or less free imitations of antique coins, in part independent devices in the taste of the antique, which especially in the reverses betray a remarkable intimacy with ancient art and a marvellous technical dexterity. We furthermore possess over fifty bronze plaques by Belli, some with Christian subjects, many of the latter copied from his intaglios. On the other hand, the number of

## Padua and Milan

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medals dedicated to his contemporaries is very small. Chief among these is the characteristic portrait of himself, which exists in three replicas, differing in their reverses (Pl. XXXVIII., 3). We have also the medals of Pietro Bembo, certified by two of his letters of the year 1532, consequently seven years before he was made Cardinal (Pl. XXXVIII., 2). The dry treatment, particularly of the reverse, betrays only too clearly the hand accustomed to the work of gem-engraving. The figure on the reverse was always held to be the Arno; not until our own days did A. von Sallet demonstrate that it was Bembo himself, as with stilus in hand, lying at the edge of a wood and on the bank of a stream, he indulges in his poetic thoughts, in precise accord with Horace's description (*Odes*, iv., 3). Some medals of Charles V., and of his wife Isabella of Portugal, are the only others ascribed to our artist.

The Paduans, however, owe their fame in the medallic art of the Cinquecento above all to Giovanni Cavino (*circa* 1500-1570). He it was who, in company with the learned Alessandro Bassiano, brought into methodical practice that copying of the antique, which the French with a suggestion



## Italian Medals

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of conscious and deliberate deception call "*contre-façon*." After antique originals, as also after the special historic and other information, furnished to him by his companion, Cavino produced hundreds of medals, in which he embodied the entire gallery of historic, literary, and poetic celebrities of the ancient world, and brought them to market with the greatest success. How many of his unsophisticated purchasers must have believed that in these productions they acquired genuine works of Roman antiquity! It is significant that the master at least never did anything to shatter such belief; for his name never appears on any of these imitations of antiquity, while he signed some at least of the medals which he struck of his contemporaries. Of such we can count forty. They bring before our eyes the ornaments of the learned world of Padua: Bassiano, Benavides, Battaglini, Dulci, Fracastoro, Passeri, Salvioni; then a number of distinguished Venetians, who were either in the service of the republic at Padua, or were resident there; finally, of foreign notabilities, Julius III. and his brother, Baldassare del Monte. The medal of the Pope was struck on the occasion of the marriage of Philip II. to Mary of England, as the scene on the reverse bears witness.



VALERIO BELLI, GIOV. CAVINO, LOD. LEONI, etc.





## Padua and Milan

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As an example of the artist's manner, we give the double-portrait medal where he has depicted himself along with Bassiano (Pl. XXXVIII., 1), as also the medal of the Venetian poet and military hero, Francesco Quirini, where, in the fashion of his hair and beard, as well as of his costume, Quirini is depicted entirely in the manner of a Roman emperor (Pl. XXXVIII., 4).

To these we may add, as one of the finest products of Paduan medallic art, the medal of Francesco Commendone, struck by an unknown hand, but in manner akin to Cavino (Pl. XXXVIII., 6). For not only on the score of style, but also on that of the age of the sitter, it must have been produced in Padua. Commendone lived until after his thirtieth year in Padua as the confidential friend of Luigi Cornaro, the sagacious author of the *Vita Sobria*, before entering the service of the Curia, where in the course of a brilliant career he soon became Cardinal (1565), and papal legate in Poland and at the Diet of Augsburg, but retired again to Padua and died there in 1584, sixty-one years old. Even in this medal the influence of the antique is evident on the obverse, not only in the draping of the bust, but also in the conception of the



## Italian Medals

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portrait; while the pleasing figure of Friendship gazing into the past and future, with the genius at her feet handing her a wreath, shows more of the sense of form and feeling of the Renaissance than of classic antiquity.

We are acquainted with but few medals of Giovanmaria Mosca, who in his youth worked as a sculptor in Padua, and later went to the Royal Court of Poland, where he remained until his death (after 1573). The portraits of King Sigismund I., his wife Bona Sforza, and their son Sigismund II., are all dated 1532 and signed. Mosca had a fellow-countryman at his side in Poland—Domenico Veneziano, from whose hand likewise a medal of King Sigismund II., signed and dated (1548), is extant.

A generation later we again find a prolific artist in Lodovico Leoni (1531 until 1612). We have already encountered him at the Roman Zecca under Gregory XIII., but more important is the work which he left behind him in his native city. Among the dozen pieces of which it consists (all dated and signed with the initials "L.L." or "LVD. LEO") are some celebrities (Benavides, Sperone Speroni, Jacobo Sansovino); also, however, young students at the High

## Padua and Milan

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School, such as the German Johann von Reichenberg and the Italian Baldassare d'Ossa, whose portrait we reproduce (Pl. XXXVIII., 5) as a specimen of the master's work.

Finally, of the work of Annibale Tosati, who worked towards the end of the sixteenth century, we are acquainted with a medal signed "A. P. F." (Annibale Padovano Fecit), which is, moreover, attested by literary sources; it represents the Paduan physician Girolamo Fabrizio d'Acquapendente. One of Speroni is cited by the same literary authority as the work of Tosati. This is not, however, either of the two of the celebrated Paduan author which have come down to us, one of these being due to Lodovico Leoni, while the other is signed "F. S."

Milan honours as the earliest, and at the same time the most important, of her Cinquecento medallists Leone Leoni (*circa* 1509-1590), a native of Arezzo, and held by his contemporaries in high esteem as sculptor in marble and bronze. His was one of those unrestrained, overflowing, forceful natures such as the decline of the Renaissance produced, and a appears before our eyes in so forbidding an aspect in the



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picture drawn of himself by Benvenuto Cellini—the prototype of the class. The rôle which artistic envy and calumny and their effective aids, the dagger and poison, play in the life of Leoni is entirely omitted by Vasari, his compatriot and earliest biographer, and has only been brought to light by the research of present times. Leoni first meets us in Rome (1537–1540) as die-engraver in the papal mint. His earliest medal of Paul III., of the year 1538, which exists in three different variants, belongs to this period. In jealousy of his rival Cellini, he procured his imprisonment (1538), under the pretext that during the sack he had purloined the papal jewels. Benvenuto succeeded in clearing himself from the charge, and shortly after (1540) Leoni himself was brought to the galleys for an outrage committed on the German goldsmith Waldener. Owing to the protection of Andrea Doria, he nevertheless speedily regained his liberty, and in gratitude made the medal of his deliverer, one of his most vigorous works (Pl. XXXIX., 1), in Genoa in 1541. On one of its two different reverses he has placed a portrait of himself enframed in the chains of the galley-convict, on the other the galley and a boat bearing him away. Called to the mint at Milan the

## Padua and Milan

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year following, he filled the post of Master there until 1545, and again from 1550 until his death. After passing sojourns in Venice, where he endeavoured to bribe assassins to remove a colleague from his path, in Parma (1546), where he was appointed by the Duke Chief Master of the Mint, in Rome (1547), where he executed a commission for the Zecca, he went to Brussels (1549) on the invitation of Charles V. There he received, as also on later visits in 1551 and 1556, a number of orders for statues and busts of members of the imperial family, which he executed partly in Brussels and partly after his return to Milan. These highly life-like works, enhanced by all the pomp of refined setting, are now found in the palaces and museums of Madrid; some also in the imperial collection at Vienna. From 1558 until his death Leoni remained permanently at Milan in his palace, which is still preserved. The possession of this palace he owed to the favour of the Emperor, and he furnished it with works of art of every kind. Unfortunately he here again stained his name with another crime: he made a murderous attack on Titian's son, who had come to Milan to raise a large sum of money—apparently in order to rob him of the gold. The strangest part



## Italian Medals

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of the matter is that he was able to commit the offence without having to expiate it in the smallest degree. To his latest days in Milan belongs also the pompous tomb of Giangiacomo Medici in the Cathedral, which he was commissioned to execute by Giangiacomo's brother, Pope Pius IV. (finished in 1563).

The master's work comprises over fifty pieces. Among them are depicted the foremost celebrities of the time: besides Charles V., already mentioned, his sister and wife, Philip II., Cardinal Granvella, Alfonso and Francesco d'Avalos and Gonsalvo de Cordova (Governors of Milan), Pius IV., Titian, Pietro Aretino, Vasari, Bandinelli, Michael Angelo. The last-named medal (Pl. XXXIX., 2) shows an entirely realistic conception of the old man of eighty-six, scarcely inferior in power to the Doria medal; on the reverse—suggested by Michael Angelo himself—we see in a simple, well-arranged composition an old blind man led by his faithful dog. The document of March 24th, 1561, which the artist sent with four examples of his work to his immortal patron, still remains to us. The medal of the celebrated chancellor of Charles V., Cardinal Granvella (Pl. XXXIX., 3), may complete our illustration of Leoni's manner.



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LEONE LEONI, JACOPO DA TREZZO





## Padua and Milan

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Approximately at the same time, but certainly in a far less favoured position than Leoni, worked Jacopo Nizzola da Trezzo (1515-1587). Since he was distinguished not only as a sculptor and medallist, but also and more especially as an engraver of gems, it is doubtful whether we can consider him—as he has previously been considered to be—a pupil of Leoni. His earliest medal (1548) is that of the Cremonese military architect Gianello della Torre, who was in the service of Charles V. and Philip II. in the Netherlands and in Spain from 1550 onwards (Pl. XXXIX., 4). In the vigorously handled, life-like portrait Trezzo closely approaches the best work of Leoni; the reverse is stylised in the spirit of the antique, and is not wholly uninfluenced by the art of Michael Angelo. It represents the Fountain of Learning, whose streams, springing from an urn on the head of a female figure, are caught and eagerly swallowed by those thirsting for knowledge. The medals of Isabella Gonzaga, the wife of Ferrante, and of her daughter Ippolita (1552), wife of the celebrated papal general Fabrizio Colonna, were also produced in Milan. In 1555 Trezzo went to the Netherlands, made there five medals of Philip II. and his wife Mary Tudor (Pl. XXXIX., 5),



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and engraved the Seal of State. In 1559 he journeyed with the King to Spain, where he remained occupied with important commissions in sculpture until the end of his life. Of this late period we only possess the medal of the English envoy Montagu (after 1560), that of Ascanio Padula, of whom nothing more is known (1577), and the architect of the Escorial, Juan de Herrera (1578). In their make and style these pieces are similar to the medal of Philip, and are far from attaining the effect and the artistic value of his earlier creations.

A third who claims a place in the series of Milanese medalists is Annibale Fontana (1540 until 1587), a member of the great and well-known family of artists from the Ticino. He acquired his fame more especially as an engraver of gems and as sculptor, to which his works at and in S. Maria presso S. Celso in Milan testify. Two medals at least may, however, be safely attributed to him—that of Fernando Francesco d'Avalos II., a military captain of Philip II., and that of Giampaolo Lomazzo, the well-known painter, versifier, and writer on art. In the *Trattato della Pittura* he mentions the medal of d'Avalos as a work of Fontana, and celebrated his own in one of his bombastic sonnets.

## Padua and Milan

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In Pompeo Leoni also (*circa* 1535 until 1610), the son of Leone, the sculptor far outweighs the medallist. In his youth (1556) he went to Spain, and remained there, occupied with important commissions, until his death. Only from 1582-1592 do we find him for a time in his native place. The Escorial and the palaces of Madrid still retain a great number of his works in marble and bronze—statues and busts of all the members of the royal family—which are in no wise inferior to those made by his father. To his early years in Milan belong the two signed medals of Fernando Castaldi and Ercole II. of Este; in Spain he made those of the Infante Don Carlos (1557), of his tutor, Honoratus Joannius, and of the private secretary to the King, Fernando de Lievana (1575). The first, which we reproduce (Pl. XL., 1), shows how far inferior Pompeo's vague manner was to the robust realism of his father—look only at the nerveless, weak figure of the Apollo on the reverse. Or did the artist perhaps wish thereby to symbolise the character of his hero?

We close the series of Milanese medallists with the two Abbondios, father and son, although their activity belongs almost entirely to other places. Four youthful works of



## Italian Medals

Antonio (1538-1591) alone remain to us of his Italian period: the medal of Jacopo da Trezzo is in any case earlier than 1555, before he went to the Netherlands and thence to Spain; that of the jurist Panzirnolo of Reggio, struck in 1563; and two others of Antonfrancesco Doni and an unknown Giulio Rossi of Carpi. Antonio's remaining pieces (forty-one certain and four ascribed to him) belong to his sojourn in Prague, where he occupied a privileged position under Maximilian II. and depicted the entire Court circle, from the Emperor (Pl. XL., 3) down to the Court architect, Ferrabosco, and the Court physician, Thomas Jordan. "The characteristic of all these works is a most pleasing combination of the aristocratic character of the Roman Court, as expressed in bearing and external disposition, with an intimate study of nature, probably strengthened by the example of German medals, which comes out especially in the rendering of the physiognomy."<sup>1</sup>

On Antonio's death his son Alessandro (1580-1653) took his father's place in the favour of Rudolf II. and of Rudolf's successor, Matthias. He was especially esteemed for his

<sup>1</sup> G. Habich, in Hellwig's *Monatsberichte über Kunstwissenschaft*, I. p. 402.



1



2



3

POMPEO LEONI, ANTONIO and ALESS. ABONDIO

*For. p. 210*





## Padua and Milan

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portraits embossed in wax and then painted; as a medallist he won repute only when after the death of the Emperor Matthias he entered the service of Maximilian of Bavaria. Munificently paid and honoured in the foremost circles as the type of the accomplished Court artist of the Seicento, he produced a great number of medals of the electoral prince; of Albert of Leuchtenberg; of Ferdinand Archbishop of Cologne; Albert of Freising; and many others. "They are all marked, like those of his father, by a distinguished conception, equally removed from all courtly stiffness and from insipid idealisation. More especially in the intellectual conception of the person depicted is revealed the lofty artistic nature, the great 'gratia' which his contemporaries extol in him." We must restrict ourselves to the reproduction of his highly spirited portrait of Maximilian at an advanced age (Pl. XL., 2), since, strictly speaking, his works fall without our scope. With the mention of the master we have considerably overstepped the limits of the Cinquecento, to which our survey was originally restricted, and we now hasten to bring it to a close with this last important representative of Italian medallic art.





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